

# Industrial Worker

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## That "dazzling" U.S. economy

BY JASON JUSTICE

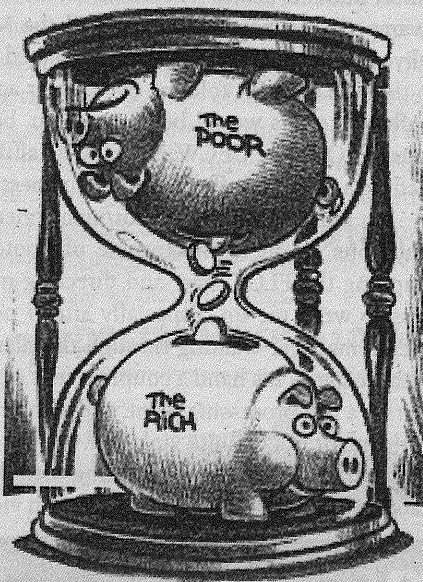
Has anyone taken a look at our "dazzling economy" lately? A recent online article by CNBC and *The Wall Street Journal* (8/7/01) shows just how dazzling it is *not*, at least for the majority of the population and working people generally. The article points out current large-scale lay-offs, with hundreds of thousands of people in the United States losing their jobs; but maintains optimism, pointing out ways to better survive the blow. But we should know better. The myth of the dazzling economy was propaganda then, and the current attack on working people's jobs is riddled with propaganda now.

The article explains that "U.S. corporations said they planned to cut 777,362 jobs" across the country – putting workers on the streets in search of other, not necessarily better, employment. Nothing new here, of course, U.S. corporations lay off people in droves every year. "Almost every day, one large company or another announces a plan to cut costs. Jobs are among the first things to go," explains the article. But the numbers now are the key, as the 3/4 million lay-off figure reaches "more than three times the number announced during the first six months of last year." A large jump, especially considering the recent wealth of the economy.

So what are we supposed to do? Luckily the article offers advice, both to prevent your own lay-off as well as deal with the blow when you're actually canned. First off, don't be a rebel. Companies don't like employees who "appear to have dissident views." "It is best to adopt the attitude that the employer is always right, and keep your opinions to yourself." Robot-like mentality is probably the best solution; just be a good slave. Never organize, don't look toward unions for help, and please, keep your mouth shut and produce. That's the main point. But also making "contributions to profitability" can be helpful as well. Working "less time while maintaining output of the same or better quality," is another way to help increase profits, and thereby supposedly help to secure your job.

And after helping to increase profits and keeping your "dissident" mouth shut, when the company lays you off anyway, then what? Well, rest assured, the article again comes to our rescue. The first, and probably most important, point the article suggests is to "breathe." That's right, take long, deep breaths of smoggy, industry-polluted air, relax and "breathe." The other important piece of advice is to go look for another job (brilliant). The advice here explains that you shouldn't get "discouraged" (when all you can find is some other shit job at half the pay), but instead make the best of it. When multiple employers turn you down

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## IWW General Assembly celebrates union's gains

BY JON BEKKEN

Delegates to the IWW's 2001 annual general assembly were in an upbeat mood August 4-5, glad to put behind them the financial crisis that nearly incapacitated the union two years ago, and to be able to turn their attention from pressing administrative matters to the work of reaching out to our fellow workers outside the union.

Portland (OR) Public Services Industrial Union 650 Branch Secretary Bill Bradley learned the results of a representation election for social service workers employed by the Salvation Army during a pre-Assembly workshop on organizing contingent workers. "I have some bad news," he told delegates meeting at the Community Church of Boston. "One of our fellow workers voted against the union." The 26-1 win was the branch's third over the past year, earning a round of applause from the assembled delegates.

Nearly 60 IWW members and guests attended from across Canada and the United States, joined by a delegate from Australia and observers from Brazil, Israel and South Korea. Unlike in years past, reports from delegates and officers were not read aloud to the body, but instead were included in an agenda pack provided to pre-registered delegates in advance.

Over the last year, GST Alexis Buss reported, IWW membership grew slightly (continuing a steady increase over the past 10 years), paid headquarters staffing was increased by 10 hours a week, and the union ran a surplus of \$18,558.34 (after setting aside a one-time bequest from a member who died last year). While modest, the surplus compares favorably to the steady deficits the union ran until January 2000, and provides the union with the resources to provide modest support for organizing campaigns and



*Delegates and guests enjoyed a program of Wobbly songs Saturday evening.*

other outreach efforts. Later this year, headquarters will begin issuing a series of pamphlets offering practical tips on subjects ranging from writing press releases to setting up and maintaining financial accounts.

Delegates welcomed the good news, but urged the General Executive Board to look into expanding paid hours to better reflect the hours worked now that the union is on a sound financial footing. Also unanimously passed was a motion commending the work of FW Buss and all those who have helped turn around the financial and organizational health of the union over the past two years.

General Executive Board Chair Joshua Freeze reported that far from having to cut back operations, the union was in the welcome position of seeking proposals for new initiatives that could help build the union. He highlighted increased organizing, pointing to the strikes at ACORN offices in Philadelphia and Seattle, and to the 800-worker wildcat sparked by our members at JeffBoat.

"Perhaps less exhilarating, but in many ways more exciting in the long term, are the industrial campaigns in 670 (recyclers) in the

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## Attacks on the poor and homeless continue, resistance builds

## Class war in Ontario

BY JEFF SHANTZ

Yet another hot summer in Toronto for the members of our class who take to the roadways, squeegees in hand, or who simply stand on sidewalks asking for change to try and sustain themselves in this miserable wreck of a system.

The city's hyper-business mayor Mel Lastman (who owns a chain of appliance stores, "Bad Boy," whose mascot is someone in prison) has long engaged in an open campaign of class war against poor and homeless people (whom he labels "thugs"). Adding to this chorus, the Ontario Crime Commissioner (charged with overseeing crime policy for the entire province) declared in an interview with the CBC that squeegees were the province's top concern (this in a province where 22 people died on the streets in a span of 24 weeks last year).

Two years ago around this time, with much fanfare (and plenty of snarling, spitting, growling and gnashing of teeth), the City Council launched a so-called Community Action Policing program backed by \$2 million of public funds. Last year they managed to find another \$1 million in a supposedly tight budget. Following the model of

Giuliani's rampage in New York City, the money is being spent to pay cops overtime to harass, intimidate and threaten poor people in targeted areas of the city. Along with their efforts to drive squeegees out of the city, the cops have been busy chasing homeless people out of so-called "public parks." Poverty's okay, of course, just keep it out of sight.

Each year the cops have kept up their campaign until well into the Fall. After that they hope Mother Nature will put in the overtime for them. As the Inspector in charge of the operation stated at its launch: "The best crime-fighting tool we have is minus-30 in February" (Globe and Mail, July 26, 1999, A10). So having no home is now a crime. Given that several homeless people have frozen to death on the streets of Toronto the past two winters it would appear that capital punishment is being practiced in Canada after all; but only if your crime is poverty.

There's more, though. Last spring Lastman and his real thugs were finally successful in lobbying the neoliberal provincial government to change the Ontario Highway Act to make squeegeeing and panhandling

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## Pouring the poison of the OBU into the bosses' veins

Brothers and Sisters:

Someone sent me a copy of *The Industrial Worker* – thanks and enclosed is a check for a subscription. Keep up the good work.

Here's a story I know you will appreciate. Last week I gave my annual presentation on Labor and Politics to the Maryland Boys State. It is ironic because Boys State is sponsored by the American Legion, which was created by the bosses after World War I to oppose radical movements like the IWW. Boys State brings hundreds of high school boys to a college campus for a week of paramilitary training and indoctrination in the American political system – and I emphasize that it is a system – so I am kind of the anti-Christ for an hour. I rant at the one-party control and describe the history of workers' political movements in the U.S. over the past centuries.

Then I get questions, which usually confirm my point about how the workers' movement has not yet been able to eliminate child labor because the young men always describe how they are screwed at work and want to know if the bosses have thoughtfully provided any political remedies. I always answer – Sorry, guys; no you have to organize.

Anyhow, the first question this year was: "Do you think the tactics of the IWW are still relevant?"

What an opening! I got to describe the wonderful history of the IWW, with a special emphasis on the organizing of immigrants and women, which are issues today. My one regret is that I did not get to ask this young man how he learned about the IWW. I can only hope that there are some high school teachers who are pouring the poison

of the OBU into the veins of the bosses.

In solidarity,  
Bill Barry

## Readers' Soapbox

### Workers' right to self-defense

Dear Fellow Workers:

I disagree with FW Redcloud's March column (I procrastinated, obviously).

Guns are not "made to be used against [us], and no one else." And whether we produce them or not, the ruling class will have them. A well-made, well-maintained firearm will last virtually forever, and you can be sure that the state will be the last to run out.

It is a positive good for ordinary working people to be armed, as long as the bosses are (look at Robert Williams' armed defense of the NAACP chapter in Monroe, S.C.). Even in the event of mass direct action and withdrawal of consent by a majority of workers, the capitalists will be able to either bribe or dupe a small minority of the workers and the petty bourgeoisie.

Every time a working-class movement has come close to power, there has been the danger of either a coup (Franco) or quasi-private vigilantism (black shirts, klansmen, and death squads). If a victorious working class deters ruling class terror, it will be because of the scale of potential resistance.

From the copper wars to the sitdowns, armed workers have fought pitched battles against Pinkertons, militia, and "citizens committees." Under martial law in the western labor wars, it was common to order the registration or confiscation of private firearms.

Indeed, there is always a strong class component to gun control, going back to the sixteenth century game laws. In Britain it was largely a response to the threat from working class radicals, and picked up steam after

the General Strike. In this country, its most active supporters are yuppies and "New Class" professionals and technocrats who enjoy managing the lower orders "for their own good."

Kevin A. Carson  
Lowell, Arkansas

*Editor's Note: Fellow Worker Redcloud was arguing not for gun control legislation, but for the working class to organize and refuse to continue manufacturing such weapons.*

### The bosses can't stand it

It's good to see the IWW back to (almost) monthly issues. They have been good. I especially liked the article about UFCW officials' six-figure salaries. We got a 20 cent raise this year, and I haven't paid my June rent yet. Also appreciate you sending me the paper, with my dues behind. Our plant's been operating on a 4 day week the last couple of months, so I'm always broke, but I'll catch up with IWW dues ASAP.

We've been leafleting on behalf of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee outside Publix Supermarket in South Tampa this summer, and I brought one of the flyers to work and taped it on the wall next to the union bulletin board. The board is already swamped with paper and I wanted the Mt Olive boycott info to stand out, so I taped it to the wall. The BA told me over a year ago leaflets like this would be no problem, because FLOC, like UFCW, is AFL-CIO affiliated, so a FLOC leaflet is "union business."

I'm kind of surprised labor/management "relations" went to the trouble of photographing the FLOC flyer and directing my boss to write me up. Especially after I noticed a manager walking through the plant with a cigar in his hand a couple weeks ago. Ours is a fish processing plant, and smoking in the plant is a definite violation.

I currently have a case pending with the Labor Board charging the manager with vio-

lating my rights under the National Labor Relations Act for writing me up last August for "always talking about the union."

Agitating for a better tomorrow...

Solidarity, Cris D'Angelo,  
war-hardened union member,  
Wobbly forever.

## UK Wobs target NHS, construction

As Labour tries to push through privatisation, increase hours of work and work load there has never been a better time for IWW to raise its profile in the Health Service. Over the next few months negotiations on the new NHS pay system, Agenda for Change, will come to an end. Many promises have been made about the deal but will it deliver?

Wobblies are organizing an IWW Health Worker Group (c/o IWW, PO Box 4414, Poole, Dorset, BH15 3YL, UK) in response to the ongoing attacks on the public health care sector and its workers.

London Wobs held a successful meeting July 16, agreeing on several projects for the coming months. In September, the IWW Building Workers Group will hold an action highlighting the appalling safety record of the construction industry. On October 20, they will book a stand and meeting room in conjunction with the Anarchist Book Fair in order to raise the IWW's profile.

On June 11, Wobs distributed copies of the *Shopfloor* Newsletter to workers in three supermarkets in central London despite attempted interference from managers and security guards, and are working to develop industrial contacts in the industry.

The London group is also planning a campaign to organize information technology workers, many of whom are on short-term contracts.

## Industrial Worker

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# Portland Salvation Army Workers Go Wobbly

BY BILL BRADLEY

Social service workers organized with IWW IU 650 Portland won another National Labor Relations Board election August 3 to represent 35 workers employed by the Salvation Army Greenhouse. The organizing committee grew to include 19 of the 35 during the campaign, and was especially strong among long-standing, well-respected staff. Extraordinary efforts were made by workers to sit down with and include every single coworker, to hear their concerns, and to welcome their full participation. Just about every worker was willing to wear a union pin, speak up on behalf of shared goals, and, where necessary, to take part in direct actions regardless of management orders.

When workers were informed that their vacations were cancelled, they met and decided to all speak up in staff meetings to urge their restoration, and, if necessary, simply to announce that vacations were not cancelled and take them anyway. It worked, and vacations were restored.

At one point management attempted to reduce floor staffing levels from three to two, so that workers would not be able to safely see to the needs of the homeless kids in the shelter, much less do the block checks called for in job descriptions or see to ordinary luxuries like going to the bathroom. Workers met and decided to reschedule themselves and clock on anyway when management was not willing to schedule enough staff.

Managers told substitute workers they were no longer welcome at weekly staff meetings after a long-standing past practice of welcoming and compensating their participation. When substitutes, with the support of their fellow workers, insisted on continuing to attend, management cancelled staff meetings entirely. Workers decided to meet anyway to do the work of the Shelter and School, and these are reported to have been among the most productive staff meetings in recent memory. Management later withdrew its cancellation of staff meetings and seems to have compensated staff time for the

officially cancelled meeting. Workers are continuing to demand that subs be welcome at and compensated for staff meetings, and are demanding triple back pay for any worker told not to come — as well as for workers whose shifts had to be contested to bring the staffing level back up to three.

There was a legal as well as a moral basis for these and other direct actions. Because the IWW had filed for a representation election, the status quo with regard to wages, benefits and conditions was supposed to prevail. The union documented and filed Unfair Labor Practice charges in response to unilateral changes in violation of the status quo (and in each instance, workers accompanied and participated alongside delegates throughout all Labor Board procedures). These charges are still pending. Affidavits have been taken, and workers have met as a bargaining committee with management to put forward the conditions under which the charges would be withdrawn. However, it should be well understood that without the militant willingness to confront these offenses through direct action, their legal basis would be of very little use.

Management has also announced cancellation of the Drug and Alcohol Group and the Softball Program, and the union is fighting for their restoration much as we fought for and won restoration of the SAGE Garden Program at Janus (with a retroactive \$1 an hour wage increase and improved client benefits). At Janus, the IWW has been able to overturn terminations and layoffs, including the again-threatened position of Administrative Assistant at Harry's Mother. IU 650 success in job defense was a critical factor in the decision of Salvation Army workers to organize with us. Hopefully, the same kind of ever-escalating public campaign that saved SAGE will also save vital but threatened programs at Salvation Army Greenhouse.

In all of this, the main Organizing Committee and its subcommittees (goals/general

organizing, community/legal, research, and fund-raising) met with and included workers throughout the shop. Workers on shift were consulted and their written considerations included in Job Branch decisions. Organizers and delegates from the industry but outside the shop initiated and helped organize the shop. Workers at Greenhouse often expressed appreciation for this volunteer help, but at the same time accepted more and more of the leadership in their own Job Branch and campaign.

The union was functioning before the election, so that election was really only a formal matter of state and employer recognition. We already recognized ourselves as a union. As a result, although many expressed concerns, the union came to be the workers in the shop. Only one worker voted against representation. No one spoke against organizing, and everyone seems to agree that the union is an expression of what the workers in the shop want.

The election followed two years of contact with IWWs at Janus Youth Programs, especially the Street Light and Porch Light Youth Shelters which are housed in the same downtown building. IU 650 was able to offer on-site support and a solid track record at Janus to which regular employees were willing to attest.

Our early contacts were with workers disillusioned with and alienated from the job. There was some interest but no committee. But after all the workers were required to re-apply for their jobs as part of a restructuring, I cold called workers in the shop and discovered there were people committed to staying at this job who might be willing to take on the long term work of building a union. Then a committee was possible, and through one-on-one and small group meetings the committee grew to include or genuinely represent just about every worker.

Eventually several leaders emerged who self-organized a phone tree, consultation,

mobilization and reminder system they thought up and implemented. Individuals cooperated to complete high quality research, and a committee is collecting and pursuing goals and grievances shop wide.

These good unionists have also already come up with organizing leads inside and outside the industry of workers similarly interested in looking out for each other and making things better as union members in the IWW. Salvation Army Greenhouse workers have also been very supportive of IU 650-represented workers at Janus Youth Programs who are bargaining for a first contract and a \$2-3 an hour wage increase. Already, women and men from this shop have stepped into leadership of our IU 650 campaign for a Living Wage Ordinance mandating a minimum wage of \$11.38 for all nonprofit social service workers contracted with Multnomah County, including the 4,221 currently making less than \$10 an hour.

It is now time for us to organize an international Industrial Union Organizing Committee for Public Service Workers. The Salvation Army, for instance, is a global corporation employing tens of thousands of workers. IU 650 could now begin to recruit, train, and organize to build Industrial Union Branches in communities all over the world, representing themselves through an Industrial Union General Organizing Committee capable of responsive self-government. This is, of course, exactly how Industrial Unions are supposed to function, as IU 650 may be poised to demonstrate.

If you are interested in organizing with or contributing to this international organizing effort, please contact the Portland IU 650 Branch at 503-231-5488 or through our union hall, the Red and Black Cafe, 2138 SE Division St, Portland OR 97202.

Bill Bradley is an organizer and shop delegate in IU 650, employed at Harry's Mother, Janus Youth Programs. He can be reached at 503-236-6948 or billbradleyiww@hotmail.com

## Dallas ACORN workers press on

In Dallas, TX, three fired ACORN workers continue to press for justice. The workers were fired when ACORN management suspected they were trying to unionize fellow employees. The NLRB has consolidated their three cases into one. ACORN made an offer to settle in late June but the settlement (which included a gag order) was deemed unacceptable by the workers.

The firings were part of a larger, national attempt by ACORN management to purge members of the Industrial Workers of the World from their offices.

## Organizing Canada's government sweatshops

The Edmonton IWW picket Statistics Canada July 23 to protest sweatshop conditions facing temporary Quality Control Technicians working in an airless, windowless office complex. The workers are expected to work seven days a week, ten hours a day without overtime pay. Many have not yet been paid for their work. Working conditions in the plant violate Federal and Provincial Labour laws.

When these casual workers organized to demand their right to overtime pay and better working conditions at least one organizer was fired. Other workers were disciplined by being put on call back for work.

Stats Canada is claiming temporary workers have no legal protections. At least one worker had to wait 53 days before getting paid.

Casual workers in the plant have joined the IWW, and organized the informational picket to demand fair treatment.

## Preamble to the IWW Constitution

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the earth.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system."

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for the everyday struggle with capitalist, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

## Join the IWW Today

The IWW is a union for all workers, a union dedicated to organizing on the job, in our industries and in our communities both to win better conditions today and to build a world without bosses, a world in which production and distribution are organized by workers ourselves to meet the needs of the entire population, not merely a handful of exploiters.

We are the Industrial Workers of the World because we organize industrially — that is to say, we organize all workers on the job into one union, rather than dividing workers by trade, so that we can pool our strength to fight the bosses together.

Since the IWW was founded in 1905, we have recognized the need to build a truly international union movement in order to confront the global power of the bosses and in order to strengthen workers' ability to stand in solidarity with our fellow workers no matter what part of the globe they happen to live on.

We are a union open to all workers, whether or not the IWW happens to have representation rights in your workplace. We organize the worker, not the job, recognizing that unionism is not about government certification or employer recognition but about workers coming together to address our common concerns. Sometimes this means striking or signing a contract. Sometimes it means refusing to work with an unsafe machine or following the bosses' orders so literally that nothing gets done. Sometimes it means agitating around particular issues or grievances in a specific workplace, or across an industry.

Because the IWW is a democratic, member-run union, decisions about what issues to address and what tactics to pursue are made by the workers directly involved.

**TO JOIN:** Mail this form with a check or money order for initiation and your first month's dues to: IWW, Post Office Box 13476, Philadelphia, PA 19101.

Initiation is the same as one month's dues. Our dues are calculated according to your income. If your monthly income is under \$1,000, dues are \$6 a month. If your monthly income is between \$1,000 - \$2,000, dues are \$12 a month. If your monthly income is over \$2,000 a month, dues are \$18 a month.

- ☐ I affirm that I am a worker, and that I am not an employer
- ☐ I agree to abide by the IWW constitution
- ☐ I will study its principles and make myself acquainted with its purposes.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Membership includes a subscription to the Industrial Worker.



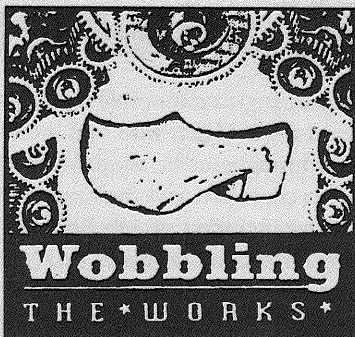
## The Bosses' Handbook

In my last column, we took a look at some recent court cases that an anti-union law firm outlined as the most essential for their clients to understand. The point of what these law firms do isn't to help nervous bosses avoid treading on the rights of workers. They aim to teach bosses to do a tricky dance right on the edge of law, while cultivating an understanding that the consequences for violating the law are minimal at worst.

Here's a look at counter-measures recommended by several firms' union prevention manuals. Not all of these are the most common tactics (I picked some because I thought they were especially cunning) but it can be fun to challenge your fellow workers to spot these tactics during the course of a campaign. The list below shows the tactic and why the consultants recommend doing it.

- *Distribute news clippings that depict strikes, lockouts, and labor unrest. Subscribe to a clipping service, have the anti-union committee do it, or search on-line.* "Employees identify with newspaper and magazine reports, lending additional recognitional value to the source."

- *Regularly mail letters concerning the union addressed to the employees' families.* Letters should highlight the costs associated with belonging to a union, the benefits that already exist in the workplace, detrimental provisions in the union's constitution, the strike history of the particular union.



Family members might be sympathetic to an anti-union message and pressure the bread-winner to not "take chances."

- *Make a display relating to the dollar amount per year the employee will have to pay in dues. Calculate the dues per year a worker will have to pay, and then buy a supply of non-perishable groceries with it. Make a poster that says how much money the pile represents and that the amount of food shown is what wouldn't be on the table that year.* Workers seeing this can potentially begin to associate being in a union with going hungry.

- *Make posters using the union's own authorization cards, publications and legal documents. Many of these items can be found in trashcans or laying around in break rooms after the union has handed them out. Highlight confusing legal language, and put into plain English what it means.*

Phrases such as "sole bargaining agent" mean that the individual employee has no

rights to negotiate on his own behalf. This can illustrate how little of the actual day-to-day workings of the union have been made plain to the employees.

- *Send recordings of messages from the employer or well-liked supervisors discouraging unionization. Add in sound footage from strikes or picket lines that are detrimental to the union.*

Workers might play the recording at home where family members may encourage a vote against the union. Some video images of strike violence shown by employers have been considered unlawfully prejudicial by the Labor Board, but audio recordings can help fill this vacuum. Sound footage can lead to all sorts of visual images, and play to the worst fears of workers and their families.

- *Issue two paychecks on the payday right before a union election.*

The first paycheck is made out to the employee with an amount equal to union dues for that pay period withheld from the check, the second check is the equivalent of the union dues. Along with the checks is an

### Solidarity with Titan workers

Students Against Sweatshops, a Chicagoland high school organization, picketed Harris Bank in Berwyn, Ill., June 29 to support striking Titan Steel workers. The bank is supporting Titan with loans while management refuses to settle the strike.

Several bank customers signed letters of support. More actions are planned.



## Mainers fight Cuba blockade

BY JIM ELLSWORTH

The U.S. blockade of Cuba causes shortages of food, medicine and other important supplies for 11 million people. The blockade is an immoral policy that uses hunger and disease as political weapons. Its purpose is to restore a puppet regime that promises to once again make Cuba safe for exploitation by the same corporations busy busting unions and closing plants in this country.

In 1895 the Cuban people revolted against Spain in an attempt to forge an independent nation. The Cuban fight for freedom was initially supported by the U.S. labor movement. Even after the mysterious sinking of the battleship Maine in 1898, labor journals sought to calm the growing war hysteria. *The Craftsman*, the official organ of the Connecticut AFL, wrote: "A gigantic ... cunningly devised scheme is being worked ostensibly to place the United States in the front rank as a naval and military power. The real reason is that the capitalists will have the whole thing and when any workingmen dare to ask for the living wage ... they will be shot down like dogs in the street."

U.S. companies already had substantial investments in plantations, railroads and mining, and so the government intervened. The U.S. Army left only after the Cuban Constitution incorporated a clause giving the U.S. the right to intervene whenever its interests, i.e. corporate profits, were threatened. Then in 1959 Fidel Castro led a revolt against the puppet regime of Fulgencio Batista. After a CIA-led invasion failed in 1961, the U.S. imposed an economic blockade and travel restrictions which persist to this day.

Let Cuba Live, a Maine-based solidarity group, was organized nine years ago to end the blockade. Working with Pastors For Peace, they have organized shipments of humanitarian aid to Cuba.

In 1992 five people were arrested at the border in Laredo, Texas, where customs officials attempted to stop 15 tons of medical supplies, bicycles, school supplies and bibles. The following year Customs seized a school bus destined for a Cuban church. After a 23-day hunger strike, the bus was released and

ultimately delivered to Cuba. The "Friendship" of 1996 required a 94-day fast by Rev. Lucius Walker to force customs officials to allow a shipment of computers to leave the U.S. Today those computers are part of INFOMED-CUBA, a project that supports the health system throughout the country.

Since 1997, Customs officials have allowed the shipments to continue without interference, preferring to avoid the adverse publicity that accompanies confiscations, arrests and hunger strikes.

All that changed on July 2, when Let Cuba Live attempted to deliver aid donated by hospitals, doctors and nurses across the border crossing at Coburn Gore, Maine. This time, customs officials attempted to detain the medical aid. Easily outnumbering the guardians of the tiny frontier outpost, activists carried many boxes across the border and delivered them into the outstretched arms of Caravane d'Amitie Quebec. Overweight federal officials scuffled with dangerous grandfathers while desperately waiting for backup from county and state police.

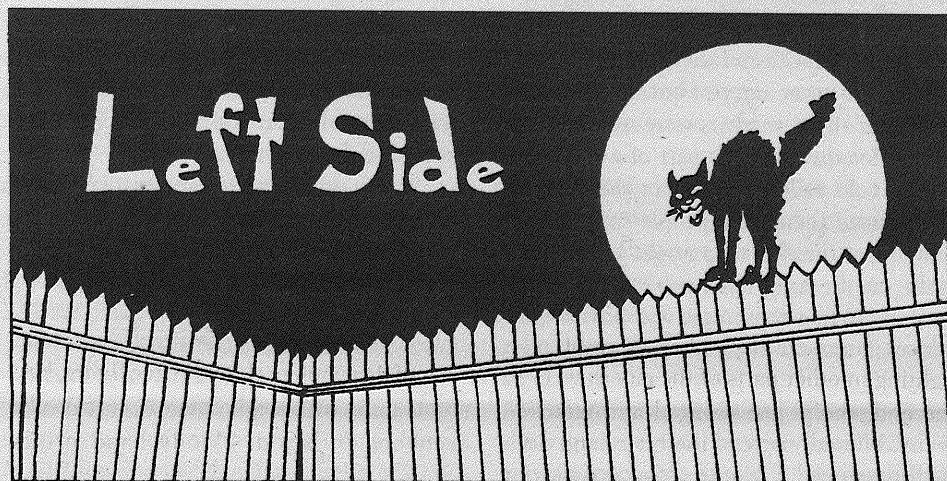
Two trucks and a trailer, loaded with heavy equipment including anesthesia machines, newborn incubators and hospital cribs, were seized. A few days later, the medical aid, being a clear threat to U.S. national security, was moved to a storage facility, the location of which remains Top Secret.

In response, a July 21 solidarity rally was attended by about 100 people, a small airplane towing a banner over downtown Portland, and a policeman on horseback.

Monument Square, the site of the rally, is in the belly of Portland's financial district. Consisting of a large granite pedestal topped with a bronze statue of a Roman warrior, it is a monument to militarism.

Seven Wobblies attended including FW Ethan Miller, who performed several songs. A large IWW banner, made by Wobblies in New Hampshire, was on proud display.

The rally closed with cries of "We'll be back!", a reference to Let Cuba Live's determination to continue to deliver aid to the Cuban people, regardless of the response of the U.S. government.



In the zoo in Buffalo, New York, there is a huge cage outside of the aviary building with a lone occupant, a powerful large bird restless and moving among its perch with talons capable of tearing away the flesh of whatever hapless creature, including humans, that gets in his way. Attached to this cage is a placard: "The bald eagle is a predatory bird which exists by robbing the nests of smaller birds, and by preying on weak or wounded animals." The placard goes on to say, "The bald eagle is the symbol of our nation. My Uncle Hornplanter would say 'It figures!'"

However this is not to put the blame on Freedomland alone, as most nation-states have as their emblem an eagle or some other creature of prey. The larger and more imperialistic the nation-state, the more ferocious the creature of prey. That is how empires come about — by preying on weaker nations. But a little ray of hope can be read in the footnote at the bottom of the placard that states that the bald eagle is an endangered species. That should make Uncle Hornplanter happy.

I remember that in grammar school the teachers used to tell us that governments serve the function of protecting the people from the unscrupulous elements in society, but after years of loss of innocence this hoary old scribe has arrived at the conclusion that the principal purpose of governments is to protect the robbers from the robbed.

Whenever there are labor disputes the government, with their police and national guards, are there to protect the interests of the employers and woe to the workers seeking redress if there is any danger of them overpowering the employers. This goes for all governments, be they capitalist democracies, "people's republics" or emerging Third World nations. Little wonder that birds of prey have become national emblems.

Half a century ago we here in Freedomland were told that if we did not go to defeat Hitler, we would have the storm troopers running our lives. A lot of German draftees as well as a lot of Freedomland draftees never got beyond the flower of their youth, but half a century later storm-trooperdom has by no means diminished but rather increased on a global scale.

Those of you who are well acquainted with labor history in Freedomland can well understand my quip about protecting the robbers from the robbed, what with Haymarket, Lawrence, the Palmer raids and what have you, and those were pretty rough times. Over the past century a new task force has developed that can put the Nazi storm troopers to shame. While they may not be as brutal (if you are white) as the storm troopers, they are more efficient and quite a bit more covert, yet over the years they have succeeded in intimidating many of our number into submissive silence. They are none other than the Federal Bureau of Investigation, known infamously around the world as the FBI.

The latest issue of *Bayou La Rose*, published by fellow worker Arthur Miller, is a well-documented scathing indictment of that body. It is full of articles by lawyers who have worked on the Leonard Peltier case, where the FBI is holding back information that would render his trial a farce, eye witnesses of the standoff at Wounded Knee, not to mention the reign of terror against the Lakota people, the close surveillance of the civil rights movement, and many other outrages. *Bayou La Rose* can be obtained through Post Office Box 5464, Tacoma WA 98415-0464 or by email from bayou@blarg.net

You might also order Arthur's new book, *Yardbird Blues: 20 years of a Wobbly in the maritime industry*. It is highly recommended.

Draftees of the World, Unite! Let's do our own globalizing!

— C.C. Redcloud



# A letter from Genoa

BY CLAYTON SZCZECZ, PORTLAND

The following report is excerpted from a letter from an IWW member who participated in the Genoa protests.

We came into Genoa to find that the police state described by friends in Torino was as of yet not in effect. It was quite easy to enter the city without dealing with police, and we found one of the Genoa Social Forum-sanctioned campsites right away. Friends old and new poured in over the next few days. July 19th was the march for immigrant rights, with about 50,000 people marching. The police did major muscle flexing with riot gear, scary-looking guns and armored personnel carriers, but everyone present was well aware that everything had to be completely tranquil to protect the interests of the immigrants.

Various groups and clusters demonstrated on the 20th, the Day of Direct Action, to either disrupt business as usual in Genoa or to attempt to breach the red zone itself. Pacifists, Greens, anti-nuke people and Catholics formed non-violent blockades of streets just outside of the red zone. Ya Basta/Tutti Bianchio (the white overalls) attempted to enter through the main street leading to the palace where the summit took place. A huge union march and the Italian black block marched from the industrial west; some attempted to breach the red zone, but most did not. COBAS (a large, militant, independent union), the network for global rights, workers' autonomy and the international black block marched in from the east and tried to attack the red zone.

No one can really say all of what happened, but it appears that no one successfully breached the red zone. This came as no surprise to me. We had the opportunity to walk through it when we arrived, and these fences were no nonsense. Not the school yard chain link bullshit they used in Quebec. We're talking thick iron mesh bolted into concrete freeway barriers, which were in turn bolted into the ground and the walls. What's more, side streets within the red zone itself were all fenced in this way, so that a successful breach of one fence would lead to another corral and certain attack.

Speaking of the police, there were 15,000 on hand. Also some French cops, military, and untold numbers of foreign secret service type spooks.

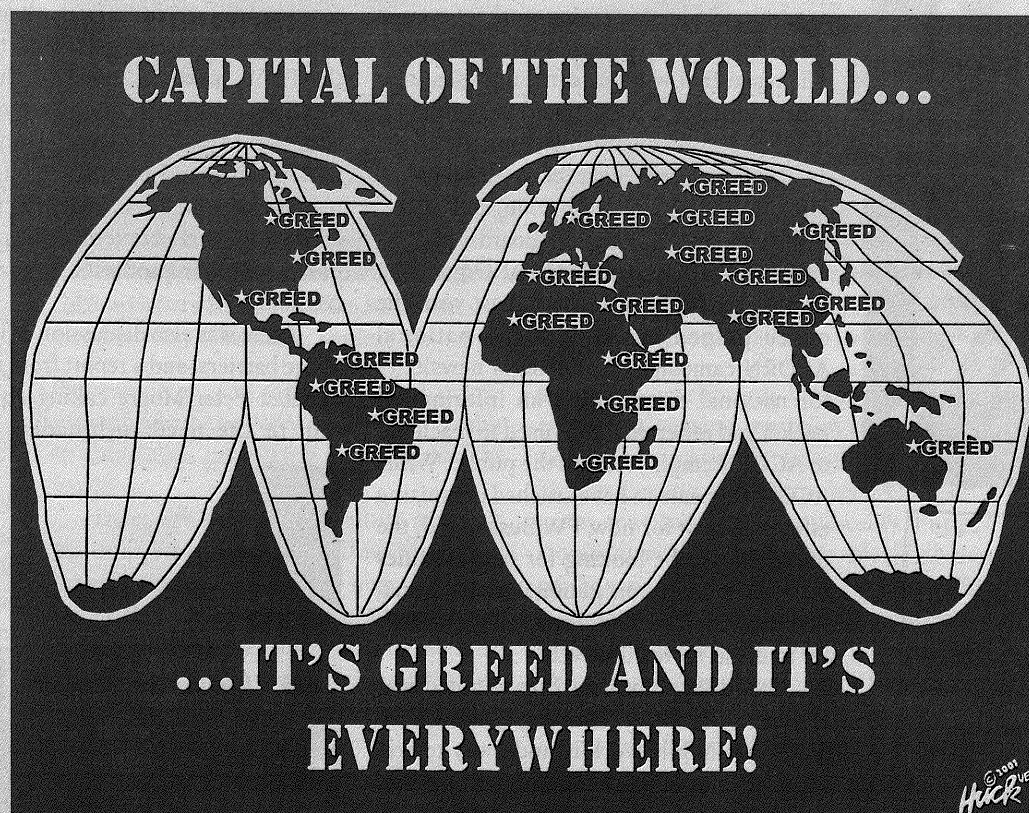
The GSF convergence center was directly adjacent to the kilometers-long police compound. This was one of the more obvious of the serious errors and underhanded political maneuvers made by the GSF, but now is

not yet the time to reflect on that, I think.

Anyway, on the 20th street fights and rioting happened all around the red zone. As this long, hectic day was drawing to a close, we happened upon a Plaza that was eerily silent, although about 200 people were in it, facing off about 50 riot cops. Due to

luck to hit someone right between the eyes when you can't see. Anyway, the pictures speak for themselves, and the impact of this death will be felt for many many years.

The 21st saw the largest mass demonstration in Europe in at least 10 years. The underestimation of numbers seems to be strongest in the U.S. press, but the mainstream media here was saying 200,000. We estimate probably 350,000 on the street, who



the silence, we at first thought it was a religious or pacifist blockade. We walked up to the front lines and saw the medics wrapping the body of Carlo Giuliani in plastic. People went nuts. Crying, screaming, some throwing stones. The riot police looked absolutely terrified. It was the only time I've looked into the eyes of a cop and seen that even in their world view they were absolutely wrong and the hate and rage of the crowd was completely justified. We were livid and unable to think clearly, so we beat a quick trail back to the camp.

No one knew what to think that night, but we assumed mass anger would be the order of the day on the 21st, slated to be the largest of the demonstrations. What actually transpired was that the GSF cowardly called off all demonstrations. Some groups heeded the cancellation, but most did not.

I should mention that the shooting happened probably two or three kilometers from the red zone, where there was nothing that the police had any interest in defending. I read an account in the local press that the 20-year-old cop who shot him said he couldn't see anything when he fired. Nice time to shoot a gun, eh? Also pretty good

knows how many silently supporting, against the entire current socio-economic order.

Two insanely different threads developed that day. Everyone of course knows about the rioting. Truth be told, it seemed to me that the rioting of the previous day was more intense and widespread. But a battle raged for close to two hours in front of the convergence center, and there were reports of street fighting in other parts of the city as well. In the end, the police charged and attacked many different parts of the huge (and non-rioting) march when it was clear that the riot could not be contained quickly.

Between 150 and 200 arrests were made during the march and hundred of injuries were sustained. Alongside the rage of activists and Genovese was the complacency of tens of thousands of bourgeois activists, Communists, unionists and GSF bigwigs. Thousands of people treated the day as a celebration, instead of the day following the death of a comrade. The GSF speaker at the end of the march even spoke of "peace and victory." I certainly didn't see any of either.

We had just finished a meeting about jail support and contacting Giuliani's family when the police raided the Independent Me-

dia Center. We were barricaded inside briefly before they forced their way in and forced everyone (including injured people in the infirmary) to the floor. Where we were it was pretty mild. There were plainclothes, masked agents in riot helmets and armed with clubs on site. Presumably they were trying to ID people. After about 20 minutes they left. We later heard that the presence inside the IMC of a lawyer and an Italian senator was probably what saved us a beating at least.

The assault across the street had already begun. There were hundreds of riot cops occupying the block, preventing entry or exit. Activists, medics, lawyers and GSF personnel (holders of a city permit to use the school) were denied access as the raid took place. We heard loud, horrible noises. It is impossible to say how long it was before people came out, but in hindsight I believe the raid was incredibly quick.

Stretcher after stretcher brought out prone and bloodied bodies. Most were out cold, but the conscious ones all raised fists in defiance. A horrified scream went up as four cops ran out carrying a body bag. At least two more large objects were rushed out in sleeping bags or bedding material. Every witness instantly thought the police had killed again. There are as of yet no reports of deaths, but they definitely brought people out in bags. We hope that they were merely economizing with materials, as most people were asleep when the beatings began.

The police eventually left, protected by old white men (GSF bigwigs) linking hands between the police and the enraged crowd. We entered the school with hundreds of others. If you can imagine a gory horror movie happening in real life, that was the inside of the school. The police made no effort to conceal, but rather left the evidence of their handiwork as a warning. Pools of fresh blood – a half dozen on each of the five floors, battered doors and walls, beams and chairs drenched in blood. Bloody hand prints streaked across walls. Each stairwell had blood dribbled and streaked all down them suggesting people were dragged down them.

You could feel the fear and desperation, especially in tiny closets and bathroom stalls where lone individuals had constructed makeshift barricades and waited for the doors and walls to be torn down around them. Not a single inch of the school was left unchecked for hiding or sleeping people, though at least a dozen made it out of windows.

I spoke with an older man who managed to make it out by escorting one of the first stretchers that was allowed in. He said as soon as the police entered every one on the first floor laid on the ground with their hands up. Without a word from police or protesters, the beatings began in earnest. He described as many as ten cops pummeling each person, and said that not a single one was spared. Later there was an argument over whether the beatings had progressed far enough. The argument was won by the more zealous and enthusiastic sadists.

The media is reporting 93 arrests and 61 hospitalizations from the school. The most reliable breakdown we have seen is as follows: 41 Germans, 15 Italians, 13 Spanish, 6 English, 4 Swedes, 3 Poles, 3 Swiss, 3 US, 2 Canadians, 1 Turk and 1 from New Zealand.

I will share with many of you the intense effect this has had on me when I am able. But know that if my commitment to complete and total revolution was ever wavering, the Italian Carabinieri have solidified it forever...

I'm sure I am leaving things out, but this must do for now. We are doing our best to assimilate these experiences and make good of them. I will let you know where I am when that seems safe. Most of all, I am trying to remember that 350,000 people on the streets of Genoa means that millions if not billions are ready to bring the whole fucking thing down and build something better...

## 1199 vs. the State and the Nation

BY CHUCK HENDRICKS

Nursing home owners and Connecticut Governor John Rowland teamed up to try and bust the nursing home workers union, District 1199, SEIU. There are 4,500 union workers in these homes and close to another 1,000 that have organized but not yet received recognition from the bosses. For years workers have been complaining about chronic staffing problems that make it impossible to do the job that the elderly patients need, and low pay that keeps more people from wanting to do these important jobs. This year they decided enough was enough and were ready to strike at 40 homes to get better pay, staffing, recognition, and in one case, card check neutrality.

The most important thing about this strike was that it wasn't just asking the boss for more – it was trying to force the state to change its policies, such as patient to worker ratios, and to allocate more money to the homes. It was not just about the boss, but rather the system that creates the bad working and living environments of the nursing homes. But the workers found out that it

wouldn't be easy to take it on. For months the bosses wouldn't even negotiate. When 1199 did their first one-day strike, we found out why; Gov. Rowland paid out of the state's treasury to fully fund the scabs in the nursing homes. The scabs were brought in from out of state and paid double the rate of union workers. The governor bought the vans to transport them, put them up in hotels, and brought out the National Guard to perform functions like transportation and maintenance at the struck homes. When the one-day strike was over, the owners kept the scabs on for five days in many homes, saying that they had contracts they had to uphold.

One month later 1199 began a strike that started at a few homes and a week later brought all 40 into the fight. Rowland was up to his same nasty tricks. He funded the private nursing homes yet again, at a tab of about \$1.5 million a day. Two weeks into the strike they started hiring permanent scabs.

With the governor on the owners' side so completely it seemed there was no way for the workers to win. Rowland made it clear that he would spend as much of the state's

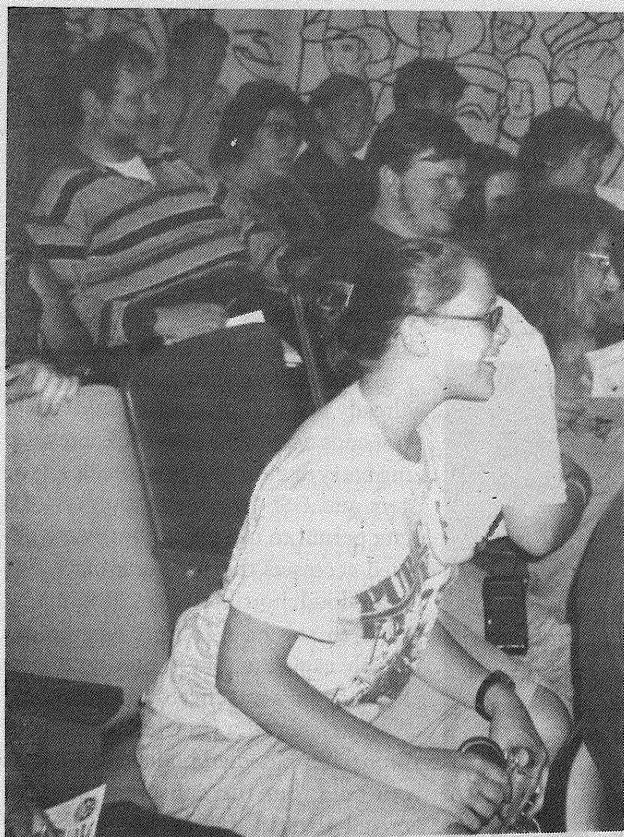
money on this private labor dispute as he had to, just as long as the union didn't win. The state ended up spending close to \$35 million on the strike. The workers lost three to four weeks of pay and the nursing home owners came out of it not missing a dime.

We learned that Rowland would go to any length to beat the union. At one point, while giving a speech to a group of business leaders, Rowland told the crowd he would appreciate it if they would hit some strikers with their cars when they saw the pickets.

In the end the nursing homes fired the scabs and all the workers got their jobs back, but only after a long fight. The workers won significant pay gains, recognition and card check neutrality, but no new staffing levels. As a final twist in the strike, the federal government has ended up bailing out the governor by picking up half the cost of the strike using Medicare and Medicaid funds.

But most importantly, the workers don't feel they lost, they feel that the state screwed them and that if they want to beat the state next time they have to have more workers mobilized and ready to fight.





## Kia ora...

Kia ora from Te Wai Ponamu (Land of the Greenstone Waters) i.e. New Zealand, South Island. Since Dunedin is arguably the first city in the world to see the sun, one might say the sun smiles on the IWW first every day now and rises all the higher for it!

We are a small presence. In fact, we are New Zealand's smallest labour union in terms of members. We look at it this way. Wee union – big idea – going far.

Presently we are spending a lot of energy on the International Paper/waterfront dispute..., we hope to sign up casuals on the wharf very soon.

Meantime we have the backing of two trade unions to run 'Effective Picketing' workshops for their members, which should be fun as well as boosting our profile.

We have already had a feature item on prime time national TV, which was a nice wee ego boost for us.

And all done on the smell of an oily rag!

We're just glad to be here and causing trouble. Of course, being 'new' to this we have a heap to learn and are doing that all the time. We already know a fair bit about what not to do. If over time there are more of us causing more trouble better, then we will be able to say that we have learned a little about what we should do.

We'd like to thank Wobs from abroad for their support and encouragement and would like to assure you all that we will only try our best to build the IWW here. It's all we can do and it's all we will do.

For the OBU,  
Wullie

## Greetings from Britain

Here in Britain we have spent the last year raising our profile through the re-launch of our magazine, *Bread & Roses*, publishing thousands of leaflets, and setting up a website and e-mail list. Slowly but surely our membership is increasing and this has given us the ability to commence forming local branches.

Industrially our main focus is in building the general distribution workers union. We have maintained our branch in a supermarket in Hampshire and membership of the GDWU has risen. *Shopfloor*, our newsletter for shop and supermarket workers, has been distributed around a number of supermarkets.

Activity has also been carried out, or is planned, among a number of other industries including the health service, post office, construction and hotel workers.

European members are currently discussing ways of setting up a local body to coordinate activities and to reduce the isolation felt by many European members...

We are keen to build more international contacts and we are grateful for the interest shown and advice given by a number of members elsewhere in the world. Good communication and a comradely spirit is vital if we are to turn the IWW into a truly global union.

Best wishes for the success of the assembly.

Bill Runacre

# IWW General Assembly celebrates union's gains

East Bay of California and 650 (public service) and 640 (restaurant) in Portland," Freeze said, noting that IUB 650 has organized a number of new shops, and is acting as a union and representing workers even in shops where they haven't been recognized. The restaurant workers campaign is issuing a newsletter *SLAMMED*, and is building a national IU 640 organizing committee.

New branches have been chartered in Phoenix, Arizona, Toledo, Ohio, and Maine, and the General Executive Board is on the verge of chartering a Regional Organizing Committee for New Zealand. Last year, the office helped coordinate the national ACORN campaign, producing a newsletter for national distribution, an information packet and other materials used to reach out to ACORN employees and the public. While ACORN appears to have crushed organizing efforts, at least for now, FW Buss noted, the union should be looking for opportunities to work together on national and international campaigns, and developing our ability to do so more effectively.

One disappointment Freeze noted was the new Organizer Training Committee's slow start. While work is underway to create a video on direct action organizing, and several pamphlets are in the works, the committee as a whole has had trouble coordinating its efforts and has been unable to begin substantive work on the training program that was to be its primary activity. The OTC received extensive discussion during the Executive Board's August 3 meeting, and will be reorganized in the hope of obtaining better results.

One concern raised by delegates was the small number of women serving on the IWW General Executive Board and as delegates to the General Assembly. While women have served as national officers and organizers of the IWW from its inception, and several women have been elected to the union's top office over the past three decades, IWW membership remains overwhelmingly male and this year only one of seven Executive Board members is a woman.

The IWW is just four years shy of its 100th anniversary, and discussions on activities to commemorate the event are under way. Freeze urged all Wobblies to take responsibility for organizing their workplace, their industry and their city over the next few years, to "help lead the One Big Union to victory in 2005."

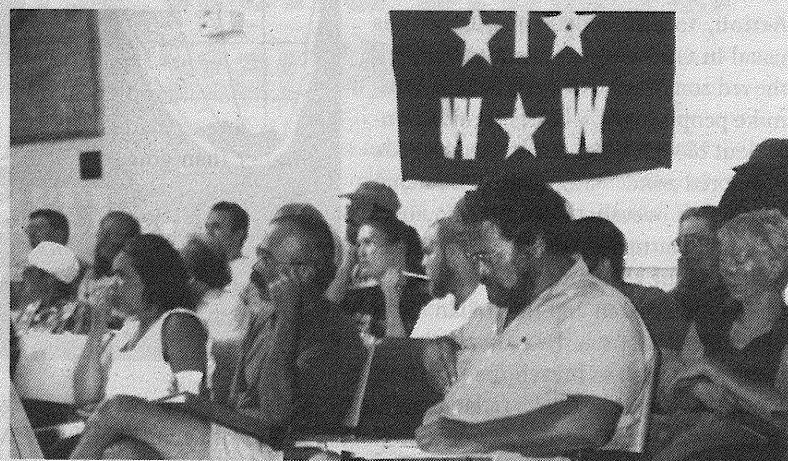
In other reports, International Solidarity Commission alternate Eric Chester reported on a syndicalist conference he attended in Göteborg, Sweden, in conjunction with protests against a meeting of European Union finance ministers. There will be fol-

low-up meetings next year in Germany (a meeting of anarchist and syndicalist unions and groups) and Spain (industrial meetings, involving rank-and-file workers from alternative unions). Chester proposed that the IWW send observers to these meetings, and especially encouraged members to participate in the industrial meetings in Spain, which offer a real prospect for organizing effective solidarity across borders. Both proposals were accepted after some discussion.

There was also discussion of language barriers, and a report from ISC member Peter Moore calling attention to the need to broaden the

union's international contacts which are disproportionately with European unions. He encouraged members to look for potential allies in their region and recommend organizational contacts to the Commission.

Delegates also approved two resolutions to guide IWW policy in the movement against the global corporate offensive. One committed the IWW to actively participating in this fall's protests against the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, and put the union on record as favoring the abolition of these instruments of exploitation and oppression. The Washington DC Branch will coordinate the IWW's participa-



## The IWW & the Movement Against Neo-Liberalism

The movement to reverse and transcend the globalization of the capitalist market economy is of critical importance to the Industrial Workers of the World. We stand behind the following principles:

I. Global trade dominated by a few massive transnational corporations is inherently exploitative. Thus, the IWW rejects the slogan of "Fair Trade not Free Trade," and counterposes "No to the World Trade Organization," "Abolish the IMF and World Bank" and "Workers Control, Not Capitalist Domination."

II. The globalization of the capitalist economy has made international solidarity even more important than before. Transnational corporations can not be fought at a single workplace, no matter how well organized the workers in that shop. We will work closely with other radical democratic unions, and with militant rank-and-file organizations within the business unions, to develop a sustained and coordinated campaign of resistance.

III. Mainstream business unions have repeatedly used scarce resources to promote the victory of politicians tied to political parties committed to the defense of the capitalist system, and to the further integration of the global market economy. Once elected, these politicians have cut vital social services, while implementing policies that make it more difficult for workers to organize effectively at the workplace. Thus we call upon all unions to stop any form of aid and assistance to the candidates of the corporate parties.

IV. Although a militant and determined working class, organized at the workplace and on the streets, can slow the push to a totally integrated economy, ultimately fundamental social change can only occur through a total transformation of capitalist society around the world. The IWW reaffirms its commitment to the creation of a new society, one based on cooperation, equality, direct democracy and working class control over the production process.

## Wobs raises cash, walk the line for Brockton nurses

BY BILL BUMPUS

As the 2001 IWW General Assembly met in Boston, nurses at nearby Brockton Hospital were in the tenth week of a strike to force the administration to staff the hospital at safe levels. (See "Nurses fight overtime," last issue.) The hospital refuses to admit that serious patient care issues result due to their reliance on mandatory overtime to staff.

At the Assembly, a resolution was passed supporting the nurses in their fight, and \$300 was raised as a contribution to the Brockton Nurses Strike Fund.

At the close of assembly business, several Wobs went down to Brockton to join the nurses on the picket line. We were all impressed with the high level of community support – seemed like almost every car was honking to show their support of the striking nurses.

While the length of the strike is of course creating hardships for the nurses and their families, morale was high on the picket line (and even higher after a few rousing singalongs of "Solidarity Forever!" and other favorites with the visiting Wobs). The nurses seem confident

that hospital management will eventually be forced to negotiate due to the mounting cost of maintaining a scab operation. The hospital nursing staff now consists of "rent-a-scabs" from the U.S. Nursing Corporation, at an estimated cost of \$5000 per scab per week. Paid police details (apparently needed to protect the hapless scabs from vicious nurses) have already cost the bosses more than \$1 million.

The real cost to the bosses comes in the lessons learned about solidarity. Commenting on a recent contract settlement between UFCW 791 and Shaw's supermarkets, one nurse said that she was almost hoping the grocery workers would go out on strike, so the nurses could repay them for their support on the picket line.

When the Brockton nurses win, it'll be a lesson for all of us that the power of workers standing up for each other and not backing down is greater than all the money, scabs, cops, Pinkertons and injunctions they can throw at us.

In our hands is placed a power greater than their hoarded gold.



tion in the Sept. 29 and 30 actions. Another resolution counter-poses the IWW's anti-capitalist perspective to the tepid begging for a "place at the table" that dominates much of the "anti-globalization" movement.

*Industrial Worker* editor Jon Bekken stressed the need to increase the newspaper's distribution, and to develop a stronger core of contributors to the paper from around the world. One delegate raised the issue of foreign-language editions. It was generally agreed that the union needed to re-establish foreign-language newspapers, beginning with a Spanish-language organ, but that to be successful this needs to be undertaken by workers who are fluent in the language and well-grounded in labor struggles in those communities (as it would make more sense to launch new publications with their own content than to translate the existing ones).

General Defense Committee secretary Mark Damron reported on the progress of efforts to re-establish the GDC, which is now issuing a regular newsletter and has made modest contributions to workers defense campaigns around the world.

Delegates also heard a report from Brazil on an occupation that began in June when 9,000 people occupied vacant land in the city of Guarulhas (part of greater Sao Paulo). The Homeless Workers Movement (MTST) plans to build a permanent community there including an urban agriculture program and schools. But at present they are fighting to get the land (a long-abandoned sugar cane plantation) legalized. They are also fighting to survive.

Delegates took up collections for this and other appeals, raising more than \$2,500 for the Charleston dockers, striking nurses in Brockton, Mass., the Brazilian encampment, a volunteer IWW publishing project recently flooded out, and an effort to build a monument to veterans of the Spanish Civil War in Edmonton, Canada.

Industrial Union caucuses in education, public service, food service and high tech workers brought members from different parts of the union together to share their experiences and discuss possibilities for coordinating efforts. A Friday evening session on organizing contingent workers featured a presentation on efforts to organize part-time teachers in the Boston area, and discussion of efforts to organize the entire range of contingent workers from day laborers hired on street corners to attorneys and computer programmers hired by the job.

Portland Wobs are exploring the possibility of a cooperative hiring hall targeting the nonprofit sector as a strategy to reduce the exploitation of temporary workers endemic to this sector. Boston Wobblies are participating in International Equity Week (Oct. 28 - Nov. 3) to call attention to the exploitation of part-time and temporary faculty, and urged branches with a presence in the education industry to join in this campaign. Other issues discussed in the workshop included the need for contingent workers represented by business unions to organize to force them to seriously address their needs, and strategies for organizing the largely dispersed professional temping workforce.

A discussion on organizing priorities raised the need to develop more effective strategies for coordinating unionwide campaigns, targeting strategic industries, and returning to the industrial (rather than shop-by-shop) organizing upon which the IWW was built. Several Wobblies active in the ACORN organizing efforts met after the Assembly adjourned to discuss the lessons of

## Class War Prisoner

The Seattle IWW is mobilizing to defend Omari Tahir-Garrett, arrested July 7 during a protest against gentrification. Tahir-Garrett has been an activist in Seattle's black community for 30 years. Police have charged him with assaulting Mayor Paul Schell with a bullhorn, but while they claim to have videotape backing up this charge they have refused to present it.



GEB members Breeze Luetke-Stahlman and Mark Damron, joined by Finance Committee member Jerry Chernouw, leading a song written during this year's JeffBoat strike.

that campaign, and to explore mechanisms through which the IWW might better be able to coordinate organizing drives across the world.

Delegates sent to referendum a constitutional amendment to allow chartered branches to credential their own delegates, rather than going through headquarters as at present. Delegates also voted to establish a standing Literature Committee to review current and proposed IWW literature and to arrange for translations of key titles.

Proposals to clarify the IWW's relationship to worker-owned enterprises received extensive attention before delegates resolved to continue the discussion over the coming year. While the IWW has long incorporated such enterprises on an equal footing with other union-organized job shops, we have recently been approached by all-volunteer projects and by operations that combine volunteer and paid labor, raising issues not adequately addressed by our current policies. A new commission will also revisit the IWW's industrial union demarcations, with an eye to bringing these into closer agreement with contemporary economic conditions.

Rejected were proposals to allow branches to vote their full paid-up membership at Assembly (currently delegates must obtain signed proxies with specific instructions in order to cast more than one vote) and allow branches to seek a dues waiver to finance translations of union literature (delegates felt this could better be handled out of the general treasury). A policy on international organizing campaigns was returned to the sponsoring branch for clarification.

Music played a prominent role in the Assembly, with songs opening several ses-

sions, a workshop on Labor Song Friday evening, a rousing rendition of "Solidarity Forever" bringing the Assembly to a close Sunday evening, and a Saturday evening program that included the Shoddy Puppet Company's original play, "Mr. Block" (based on the song by Joe Hill), IWW organizer Gina Giazsoni's reprise of a song first sung on the picket line outside the Philadelphia ACORN office, a rousing sing-along of IWW songs led by Fellow Worker Joel Lewis, solo performances of songs old and new by Wobblies Bill Bumpus, Jim Crutchfield, Mark Damron and Joshua Freeze, a reading of a forgotten classic labor poem by Bob Helms, and a boisterous reggae/punk set by the Massachusetts band The Wobblies.

FW Steve Kellerman of the Boston Branch spoke Friday to a standing-room-only crowd at the Boston Public Library, displaying several of the library's Sacco-Vanzetti artifacts and telling the story of these militants who were framed on murder/robbery charges, but were part of an insurrectionist tendency advocating tactics quite different from those preferred by the IWW.

The Assembly concluded with nominations and motions of solidarity with a variety of struggles, including the Charleston 5, the striking Brockton nurses, and an IWW member imprisoned in Finland for refusing military service. A special vote of thanks was passed by acclamation for Ellie Gillette and Rob Dalton, who kept the delegates well fed throughout the weekend.

Nominated for GST was Alexis Buss. Nominees for the General Executive Board (several of whom are expected to decline nomination) include John Hollingsworth (Ottawa), Bruce Mark Nevin (Lancaster), Mike Hargis

(Chicago), Jim Crutchfield (New York City), Patrick McGuire (Winnipeg), Ryan van den Berg (Edmonton), Breeze Luetke-Stahlman (Lawrence), Joshua Freeze (Austin), Penny Pixler (Chicago), Justin Vitiello (Philadelphia), Mark Damron (Cincinnati), Patrick Stenner (Vancouver), Robert Rush (East Bay), Miriam Fried (Philadelphia), Bill Bradley (Portland), Heather Hall (Winnipeg), Fiona Taylor (Australia), Hazel Roehrig (Salt Lake City), Tony Roehrig (Salt Lake City), Aaron Rothenberger (Phoenix), Eric Chase (Olympia), Barry Rodrigue (Maine), Rob Dalton (Boston), Bob Helms (Philadelphia), Nathan Kauffman (Boston), John Baranski (Santa Barbara), Jon Bekken and Steve Kellerman (Boston).

Mark Damron was nominated for a second term as General Defense Committee Chair. International Solidarity Commission nominees include Peter Moore (Ottawa), Liam Flynn (Baltimore), Eric Chester (Western Massachusetts), Mike Hargis (Chicago), Eugene Plawiuk (Edmonton), Ron Kaminkow (Chicago), Justin Vitiello (Philadelphia), Fiona Taylor (Australia), Heather Hall (Winnipeg), Paul Huxtable (Victoria), Jon Bekken (Boston), Frank Callahan (Worcester), Dan Elgin (Austin), Tommy O'Donnell (Philadelphia), and Gordon Flett (Victoria), Franklin Devore (San Francisco), David Grenier (Seattle), Beatrice McGeoch (Providence), and Gene Parshall (East Bay).

Nominees for the site of next year's General Assembly include: Seattle, Washington; Portland, Oregon; Phoenix, Arizona; Ottawa, Ontario; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Vancouver, British Columbia; and Washington, DC. The assembly will be held on the first weekend of September, with the preceding Friday reserved for an organizer training workshop.

## Education workers fighting back

Wobblies joined two pickets at the Boston administrative offices of the University of Massachusetts July 11 in solidarity with U Mass Amherst workers. While we picketed, nine members of the Graduate Employees Organization (UAW) were inside, demanding to meet with top administrators. After five hours of waiting they were ordered to leave by security, but refused. Police were called to the site but the GEO members still refused to leave. Nearly two hours after closing time, U Mass representatives finally agreed to a meeting the next day.

U Mass categorizes classes taught in the evening and during the summer as "Continuing Education" courses, paying faculty lower salaries with no benefits. (Students pay the same tuition, of course.) Nearly 90 percent of continuing ed faculty signed union authorization cards designating GEO to represent them, but administrators are blocking an election with procedural objections and claims that the faculty are not employees.

Administrators also walked out of contract negotiations with GEO for graduate employees (mostly teaching assistants), many of whom also teach in the continuing education unit. Administrators are demanding that existing childcare coverage be removed from the contract, among other concessions. At the July 12 meeting they refused to budge on these positions.

Ironically, the same day ballots were being counted for continuing education faculty at U Mass Boston, who voted 87 percent in favor of union representation.

Boston Wobs are also participating in Campus Equity Week Oct. 28 - Nov. 3, a week of coordinated activities on campuses across North America to focus attention on the exploitation of part-time and temporary faculty and other education workers and demand action to solve these inequities.

Wobblies in other cities, are strongly encouraged to join in. The Boston Education Workers IU Branch will produce leaflets which they would be glad to make available (ewiu@parsons.iww.org, or write PO Box 391724, Cambridge MA 02139). For those with Internet access, a wealth of material is also available from [www.cewAction.org](http://www.cewAction.org)

## The IWW and the World Bank

*Whereas*, the World Bank controls more investment capital, and together with the International Monetary Fund, has more policy influence in the world economy than any other institution; and

*Whereas*, the World Bank and IMF attempt to restructure economies for the benefit of the employing class, and to produce for export, rather than producing for the needs of the of the local working class; and

*Whereas*, workers throughout the world resist the implementation of the policies of the World Bank and IMF through general strikes; and

*Whereas*, the World Bank does not respect the rights of workers to organize, and refuses to respect freedom of association; and

*Whereas*, the World Bank promotes policies that lower wages, proliferate sweatshops, and enact repressive labor laws; and

*Whereas*, the development projects of the World Bank are environmentally destructive and in discord with the Earth; and

*Whereas*, the policies of the World Bank aggressively promote privatization of basic public services such as education, health care and water; and

*Whereas*, 80 percent of the resources controlled by the World Bank come from the sale of World Bank bonds to institutional investors, such as unions and universities, and these resources are used to carry out the aforementioned destructive policies;

*Therefore, Be It Resolved*, that the Industrial Workers of the World call for abolition of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund;

*Be It Further Resolved*, that the IWW will not purchase bonds issued by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank). In addition, we call on workers and unions throughout the world to do the same.

*Be It Further Resolved*, that the IWW calls for an immediate cancellation of all debts owed to the World Bank

*Be It Further Resolved*, that the IWW will join protests against the World Bank, and stands in solidarity with the Anti-Capitalist Convergence for protests in Washington, DC., this September and October, 2001.



# Child care workers need new, militant approach

BY SUSAN DORAZIO

On July 18, five Wobblies from Western Massachusetts demonstrated in support of three child care workers fired for union activity at the New Beginnings Day Care Center in Springfield. They, along with their co-workers, are also members of UAW Local 2322, currently engaged in a contract struggle with Springfield Partners for Community Action – a quasi-independent city agency which has on its staff a notoriously anti-union lawyer pulling the strings for the usual “well-meaning” executive director.

Unfortunately, almost everything else is predictable also: the perfunctory support of the local AFL-CIO Labor Council; the litany of “unfair labor practices,” to be ruled upon sometime; reliance on the mediation process to resolve grievances; lack of attention by the media (traditional and alternative); and a hands-off policy toward the local Democratic Party big-wigs (including Springfield mayor Michael Albano and Springfield State Rep. Ben Swan, the latter one of the “leaders” of the black community).

Arrayed against this dismal cast of characters and doomed business-union strategy is a group of angry and determined African-American child care workers, some of whom are being paid minimum wage and all of whom are being paid at least a dollar an hour less than their counterparts in neighboring cities and towns.

Of course, the point is not that the rest of us are doing much better (the average starting pay for child care teachers in our area is a measly \$9 per hour), but that at least

this group of workers has unionized and is starting to fight for wages, benefits and working conditions which are their right. In this way, they are an inspiration to the majority of us who have been “professionalized” into subservience to lobbying groups and “sympathetic” legislators.

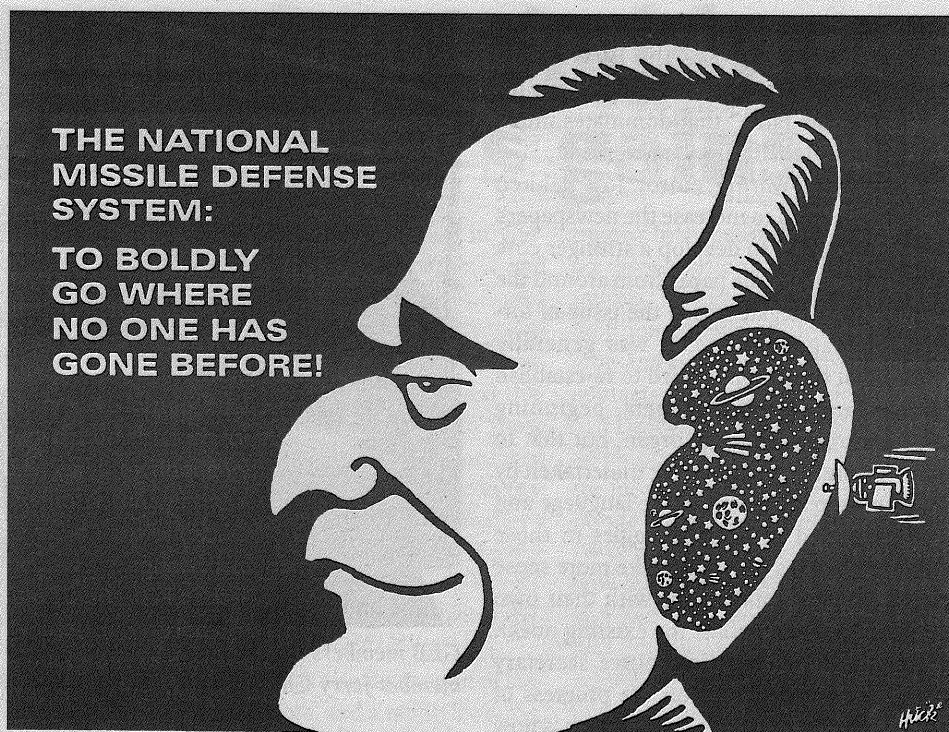
The frustrating part is that both the business union and advocacy paths are dead-ends. Without more militant tactics arising out of a radical economic and political analysis, we can't win even our short-term demands, let alone help create a new kind of society. For example, here are some strategies I would like to see the Springfield workers consider: 1) direct action against the city administration, whose links to the center's sponsoring agency make it a perfect target; 2) start making contacts with workers at other local child care centers, toward the organization of a state-wide alliance of child care workers which could bring our collective grievances directly to the state house; 3) link up with activists in other unions and community groups to pressure the local labor council to mobilize its members to fight alongside the child care workers.

Unless there is a more militant response demanding the immediate reinstatement of the fired workers, the union at this workplace will be discredited, and these child care workers worse off than ever – in a child care/human service system already at the brink of disaster.

Susan Dorazio, x346303, works at the Hampshire-Franklin Day Care Center in Leverett, Massachusetts.

## THE NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM:

TO BOLDLY GO WHERE NO ONE HAS GONE BEFORE!



## Oct. 13: World protests against \$tar Wars

BY R. STOCKWELL

On Saturday, Oct. 13, the IWW is joining with over 175 other endorsing organizations around the planet to demonstrate opposition to the Bush space-based missile defense scheme. A rehash of the Reagan-era strategic defense (SDI) “star wars” initiative, the Bush plan will call for billions of dollars of workers’ confiscated surplus value (e.g., \$100 million for each missile test performed at Vandenberg Air Force Base, whether “successful” or not, and about \$100 billion being proposed for R&D over the next ten years) so as to advance capitalist hegemony

in outer space.

Free, universal health insurance? Livable wages? A 24-hour work week? Decent, affordable housing for working people? Day care for working class families? Environmental clean-up? Mass development of non-polluting transportation systems? Not a chance. But witness the ease with which the capitalist war machine and aerospace corporations are quickly poised to receive massive amounts of new government funding. Quality education for all? Fully funded disability and/or unemployment coverage? Secure and comprehensive retirement benefits for all? “Off the radar screen,” as the corporate-media pundits are fond to quip. But witness the ease with which Bush will accept the likelihood of a new arms race, of increased world tensions – of the risk of an unprecedented space war! – through unilaterally abrogating existing international agreements such as the 1972 ABM Treaty, the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, and several related UN resolutions.

This new, high-tech build-up of the military-industrial complex, as with all things military-oriented within a class system, directly translates into the further impoverishment and deeper enslavement of the international working class. The star wars plan is linked in lock-step with super-capitalist “globalization”; political discussions on using theatre missile defense (TMD), as an example, focus almost exclusively on the Middle East and Asia-regions which are inextricably tied to corporate interventionist policies and American access to oil.

With both wings of the American political establishment supporting the basic missile defense concept (“No one is saying don’t continue down this road,” Sen. Joe Biden, Dem., DE), large-scale grassroots opposition and a strong, united show of support on October 13 are essential. There are, as of this writing, 64 selected protest sites across 18 countries, ranging from the U.S. embassy in Accra, Ghana, to corporate war-junkies like Raytheon in Tucson, Arizona, Aerojet in Sacramento, California, and TRW in Cleveland, Ohio, to Submarine Base Bangor (Washington), to the Lakenheath Air Base in Suffolk, England.

If you have access to the internet, go to [www.space4peace.org](http://www.space4peace.org) and click on “Calendar of Events.” Select “October 13/International Day of Protest” for an updated list of protest sites. Otherwise, please contact Bruce Gagnon of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, P.O.B. 90083, Gainesville FL 32607, or 352-337-9274. Let all workers worldwide join in one voice to defeat this robotic “protection” racket – a scam “defense” system whose only purpose is to firmly secure the ongoing plunder of the world’s oligarchs.

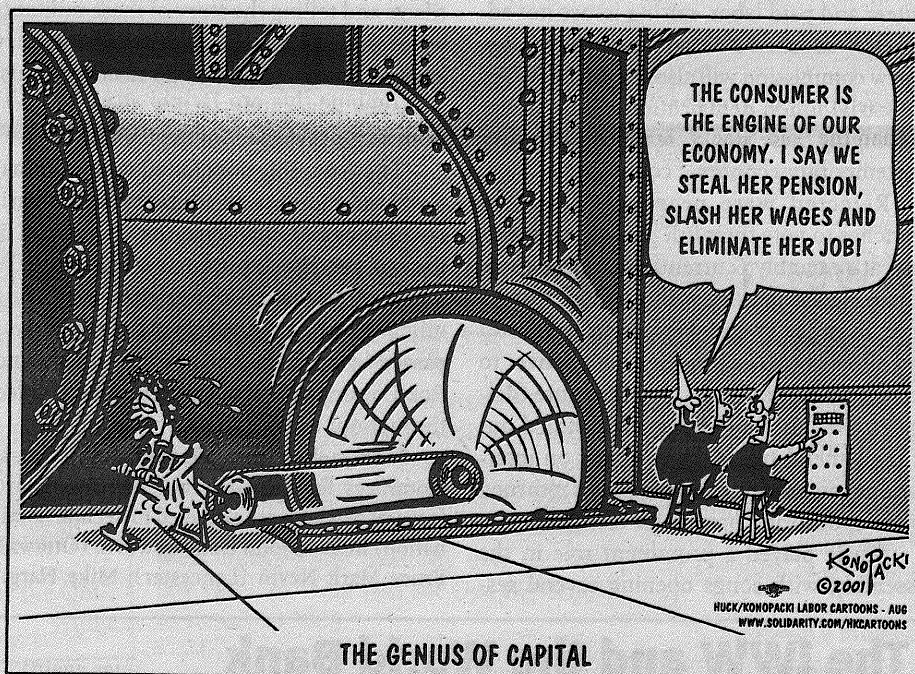
## Dazzling economy...

continued from page 1

because everybody is getting laid off, the article advises, remember that “every ‘no’ is a free education. Use every interview and rejection as a learning experience.” Getting fired means free education, we should really be enjoying the bliss.

Pointing out the bright side of losing your job is nothing new for the business press. Four years ago while the economy was still “stupendous,” *Business Week* suggested their own version of the bright side for the tens of thousands of US workers being laid off at the time. They actually said that workers enjoyed being laid-off. Although workers tend to suffer a 20% pay loss each time they’re laid-off and move back into the work force, this was no big deal, according to *Business Week*, because workers find “enjoyable” the new learning opportunity which await them with each new job. Specifically, workers in higher-wage production and factory jobs who were being laid off were then forced into public service sector jobs, such as working at K-Mart. Here, although they made much less, they could learn new and exciting things, such as the cash register. What joy, and certainly worth the pay cut. Perhaps this is what the CNBC/Journal article meant when it stated that being laid-off “will end up being a blessing in disguise.”

So how does this happen? Why, if U.S. corporations have been experiencing all-time highs in profits, would they need to slash close to a million jobs at once, and certainly far more later? Where’s all the profit? It’s exactly where it always was, in the pockets of capitalist shareholders who rule the world and determine our fate with no room for public participation. Whether an economy is doing good or bad does not reflect what is actually happening with working people. It has to do with what’s happening to shareholders of the capitalist class. If they are getting richer every year, then the economy is “stupendous,” but if they fail to meet their profit predictions then the economy is doing badly. Either way, we’re getting screwed, it’s a matter of propaganda.



Profits happen because working people must suffer economically. That means low wages, little or no benefits, and ultimately lay-offs for many. Lay-offs are a useful tool after years of profit-making, because it dramatically increases profits further, and drives higher-paid workers out; if it replaces them it does so with new low-wage employees, sometimes here, sometimes in more easily exploitable countries. Trying to avoid this predicament by working in ways that will make “contributions to profitability,” as the article suggests, or keeping “your opinions to yourself,” will not save your job. It will simply make you a greater pawn, working harder to make someone else rich, who’ll exploit you while they can and perhaps lay you off eventually, ultimately giving themselves a big fat raise. This is exactly what has happened over the past five years with the results now before us.

The CNBC/Wall Street Journal writer suggests complaisance and corporate loyalty in the face of all of this.

But we should be doing exactly the opposite; we should be complaining, we should be dissident and we should be organizing. Corporations are dictatorships, and they should be recognized as such and challenged

accordingly. As long as we sit back and let them rip us off, only later to lay us off, the situation will only get worse. Resistance to capitalism is the key, union organizing is essential, and talking with your coworkers about how best to fire your boss is the way.

## Guatemala: intimidation...

continued from page 12

managers who refused to intervene.

Ten union leaders were forced to sign resignation letters. Since then the violence inside the plant has reached the point where even Clairborne’s monitors have been roughed up. While Liz Clairborne has expressed concern to Choi & Shin’s, it has been unable or unwilling to exercise its influence effectively enough to stop the intimidation.

Please contact Liz Clairborne and ask them to pressure their contractor, Choi & Shin’s, to stop its instigation of mob violence, allow the reinstated workers to go back to work, and negotiate with the union in good faith. Contact: Paul R. Charron, Chairman and CEO, Liz Clairborne, Inc., 1441 Broadway, New York NY 10018. Tel: (212)-354-4900; Fax: (212)-626-3416. You can email Liz Clairborne through their webpage at <http://www.lizclairborne.com/lizinc/lizworks/workers/contact.asp>.



# A cycle of speed-ups and lay-offs

BY X351991, CLINTON MISS.

Since the beginning of this year, many employees of Delphi-Packard Electric Systems have been subject to a cyclical system of being laid off for one to two weeks at a time according to seniority. The Delphi bosses, in their infinite wisdom, have termed this practice "downtime" rather than an actual layoff, presumably in order to sugarcoat the fact that a corporation that posted record profits for the fiscal year 2000 began the next year by terminating most of the "part-time" workforce and reducing the number of full-time laborers who are actually scheduled to work at any particular time. This is being done concurrently with a plan to buy out as many longtime employees as possible with an early retirement/buyout proposal intended to eliminate more than 10,000 positions by year's end. The way this system of cyclical "downtime" has been instituted has led to a series of technical, financial and management problems and confrontations for the workers at the Clinton, Miss., Delphi complex.

Although the position of corporate engineers and management has always been that each worker should be able to perform at an optimum level of productivity on whichever machine he or she is assigned to, the simple truth of the matter has always been that each worker becomes comfortable working on a single machine and comes to know and adjust to the singular quirks that may have developed on that unit. When workers are randomly re-assigned to machines vacant due to layoffs, they are almost always subjected to harassment from the bosses when productivity does not match that of the laid-off worker. Furthermore, as productivity drops due to the actions of the bosses, the lead-time for work orders inevitably drops, increasing management's demands for more products in a shorter amount of time. In short, the bosses at Delphi are now learning how to extract more work from

fewer laborers for less money by laying off a regular portion of the rank-and-file and using the argument that this work just *has* to be done within a shorter amount of time in order to keep Delphi profitable so that workers will be able to continue operating under increased pressure for less pay.

The financial strain this puts on Delphi workers is a given, but is complicated by the fact that a four-tier hiring plan exists at the Clinton complex. The first two tiers, the traditional and progressive-parity hires, each receive state unemployment and "sub" benefits from Delphi that ensure that each person from these plans who is laid-off receives close to 80% of weekly pay for a theoretically indefinite period of time. The third tier, the Competitive Hiring Plan, receives state unemployment and funds from a Delphi-controlled investment account that typically provides 80% of full pay for a period of one month. The fourth tier, which came in under the 1999 contract, is entitled to no company unemployment benefits at all by agreement with the national and local IUE-CWA.

As the period of "downtime" has been ongoing from mid-January, the most recent hires in the lower two pay tiers are now being laid off by the company with the full knowledge that they will be receiving less than 50% of their standard pay. Couple that with the corporate practice of rigging seniority equalization records to ensure that the lower-seniority workers are laid off more often than the "old-timers" and the sky is the proverbial limit for the profits Delphi can

amass by selling off inventory while not paying out unemployment benefits.

The most volatile flashpoint for relations between labor and the bosses would, one presumes, be the demand for an increased speed of work on unfamiliar machines while one's fellow worker has been idled by Delphi. While this Wobbly's FWs are already quite familiar with the idea of Direct Action as a means to quietly control and stop management's demands, there does not seem to be any concept of how to present a concerted front to combat all of the bosses' abuses of the rank-and-file.

This unfortunate scenario may be attributed to several causes. Historically the Deep South has always been pro-business, to the point that labor unions are still regarded with more than a normal amount of suspicion.

This tendency rears its head at Delphi in the sheer number of workers who blindly accept the concept that it is the wage slave's obligation to accept the bosses' demands for more work for less pay and that laborers should be subjected to being idled so that the company's profits can rise that much more. Even though some acknowledge that the company's actions are grossly unfair and harm only those who actually perform labor for a living, almost to a person they simply cannot accept that an injury to one is an injury to all. Instead, there is talk of "taking one on the chin" for Delphi.

Combine this pro-Delphi attitude with an all-too-pervasive concept of Christian humility and knowing one's place, and

*The Delphi bosses term this practice "downtime" rather than an actual layoff, presumably in order to sugarcoat the fact that a corporation that posted record profits has terminated most "part-time" workers and is reducing the number of full-time workers actually scheduled to work at any particular time.*

Delphi finds itself with a workforce ready-made for exploitation and abuse.

At the time of this writing, the number of work orders has increased to the point that, yet again, the output demanded far outstrips the mechanical limits of the machines. Despite that, further layoffs are planned to continue until the end of October. This is happening even though work orders are being reassigned to the Clinton complex by the top bosses as a result of their having sent too many work orders to be completed by our underpaid Mexican FWs in order to bring in even more profits.

Furthermore, as a result of supervisors' machinations, lower-seniority workers are now being laid off for two weeks to every one dealt out to upper-level "traditional" employees. Adding to that injustice is the fact that dozens of open full-time positions exist in another section of the complex devoted to producing molded plastic components, but workers in plant 24 are being barred from these positions by management in order to have on hand a sufficient work force that can be used to operate every available machine when needed, and then be laid off with impunity after a spurt of heavy production is over.

Just what is the response of the IUE-CWA local and its elected officials? They continually advise each employee to simply do exactly what the bosses tell them to do, take the downtime as necessary for the profitability of the company, and don't even *think* about leaving the union. Apparently Solidarity Forever applies only when computing the monthly dues skimmed from each worker by Delphi for the IUE local.

Unfortunately, this Wobbly must report that the bosses' dream of having a completely subservient workforce still exists in the Deep South. When one combines the area's extreme anti-union bias, the at-times ridiculous reliance on religious dogma to rationalize mistreatment at the hands of our corporate overlords, and the continued existence of union locals that operate only to sustain the profits of the bosses, the situation seems dire indeed.

Still, there are glimmers of hope from time to time. Just when the rank-and-file seems to have no resistance left, a single worker takes a stand against a particular injustice and, rarely, wins. The job at hand is to reawaken the concept within the entire body of laborers that "An injury to one is an injury to all," and make that a rallying cry to wrest more of our labor's results away from the corporate parasites and return them to their rightful owners—the working class. Until that point is reached, the bad ol' days in Dixie will continue to mean deprivation and abuse for the workers.

## Widening the gap between workers & pie-cards, or the Yardbird Mergering Screwed Blues

BY ARTHUR J. MILLER

One would think that with the continuing decline of membership and the Carpenter's Union withdrawing, the unions of the AFL-CIO would start to get the message that maybe they should start caring about their membership. But here in the state of Washington UA (United Association of Pipefitters, Steamfitters and Plumbers) is going to even greater lengths to draw away from the rank and file.

There is a move in this state to merge locals together to create larger organizations. UA wants only two locals in the state, one in eastern Washington and one in western Washington. But our local (UA Local 82) is already too big. Though the local started in Tacoma (folks still call it the Tacoma local), our union office is 32 miles away and union meetings are held 64 miles away, for the local stretches over 128 miles of southwestern Washington. Now we are voting on a merger that will take our local from the southwestern Washington border all the way up to the Canadian border. The only area not covered will be Seattle, where UA Local 32 (which I once was a member of) refuses to cooperate with the super local idea.

There are three main reasons why such a super local is a bad idea:

1. It will place our union elected and paid officials far away from most of the workers they work for.

2. Union meetings are already hard to get to, now they will be all most impossible to get to for most working members. Thus the union officials will have even greater control over the union.

3. When you are laid-off you sign the workbook and when your number comes up

you are called. People who live in one town have no priority for local work. This will force workers who can't leave home to work in other regions to turn down work and will open up the local work for people from out of town. This only divides workers between those who can travel and those who can't.

Since most of us can't make the union meetings because they are on a work night 64 miles away (one-way) we have not been involved in the discussion surrounding the merger. Since our members are spread out on so many jobs in a large region, we can't get a rank and file opposition going. The ballot came with only the pro-merger side included. It went on about how much money the union will save. Though there was nothing about reducing how much money we working folks pay in dues, which is high because we have to pay a percentage of our wages to the union (they call that working dues); last month I paid \$176 for just one month of dues. The idea from the union is that no one is against the super local idea. But among my fellow workers in the shipyard I work, not one of them likes the idea and they all think we are getting screwed.

At the same time I had to return to work because I could not afford to live off what I was getting from my injury. I guess I am now a real Wobbly because I wobble a bit as I hobble around on a bad knee on the deck of a ship. The shipyard has its own insurance company who I am in a fight with because the doctor wants a MRI scan done on my knee but the insurance company has not approved it. They have not denied it, they just will not approve it.

So here I am wobbling and hobbling as we are working 10-hour days, 7 days a week,

pushing fast to get laid-off soon, on a knee that I could be causing further damage to.

The union tells me that this is not a union matter and I wonder what the hell is a union matter to a rank-and-file old yardbird like me, outside of paying dues and getting screwed?

Lord. Lord, I got them old getting screwed from every direction blues again!

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# Class struggle in Ontario

continued from page 1

illegal. The resulting legislation, "The Safe Streets Act," makes it illegal to give "any reasonable citizen" (I guess we know who that is) "cause for concern" (whatever that might be). In sentiment and in practice this law gives leeway to cops and small business owners to continue or expand their harassment of the poor and homeless.

Of course, a very real and vicious crack-down has been in effect for some time now. Cops have routinely ticketed squeegeers for anything, be it trespassing, loitering or littering. Likewise some store owners make it a hobby to verbally or physically attack panhandlers or get the cops to do it for them.

Cops claim that they're not trying to rid the city of squeegeers, just trying to keep people from stepping into the roadway. So far, however, there's been little demonizing rhetoric or physical harassment related to the jaywalking scourge.

While the CAP is touted as "all of the forces best and latest thinking on community-based policing" (Globe and Mail, July 26, 1999, A10) none of this is new at all. These are the same tactics the bosses have hit us with for centuries (they called them "poor laws" in 17th Century England). The names change but the intentions remain the same. Along with programs like workfare and the reduction or elimination of social services, criminalization is about driving the poor, unemployed and homeless into wage slavery or death. Serve capital or go away!

In case this point is missed the "soft cops" (i.e. social workers) launched a "Squeegee Work Youth Mobilization" program to teach squeegeers to get jobs repairing bikes (\$250,000 from City Council and \$395,000 from the federal government). What was not reported was that this program was a complement to the CAP with cops involved in its implementation and decision-making.

Despite the great career prospects for budding bike repairers, the city Commissioner of Community and Social Services has admitted the program faces some obstacles: "The challenge is this is a group of kids that does not fit into the system. They are very wary of any kind of authority – police, schools and even social agencies" (Globe and Mail, July 27, 1999, A9). Geez, the nerve of some people's kids.

None of this is happening without a fight, however. Anyone who took part in 1998's Active Resistance (AR) anarchist gathering in Toronto will recall that the climax was a march and demonstration of over 1000 people. The "Hands off Street Youth" march was jointly organized by AR and the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (a direct action anti-poverty group in which several wobblies are active). And in 1999 OCAP organized a few hundred strong occupation of Allen Gardens Park, an early target in the CAP where cops routinely cleared homeless people out

or harassed people because of skin color or appearance. As OCAP put it in their communiqué from the occupation: "Let the City be on notice that it is our right to secure a safe place to sleep, eat and live that won't be interfered with" (August, 7, 1999).

Last summer OCAP and allies from unions and community groups raised the level of resistance by several degrees. A summer of direct action kicked off June 15 with a mass effort to address the Provincial Legislature, recognizing that the Provincial government led by Mike Harris has been at the forefront of attacks against poor people in Ontario. The action ended in a full-scale police riot during which demonstrators put up so much resistance that many cops contemplated leaving the force. Lost in much of the media madness were the three very specific demands which participants wished to deliver to legislators: 1) Reinstate the 21.6% already cut from social assistance by the ruling Conservative government since 1995; 2) Repeal the pro-landlord (and absurdly named) "Tenant Protection Act" which removed rent controls within Ontario and has directly led to thousands of evictions in Toronto alone since its inception, and; 3) Repeal the "Safe Streets Act."

Ever since the collapse of the Provincial Days of Action (one day, rotating mass strikes against the Conservatives) and the failure to follow through on a province-wide general strike in 1997 the resistance to neo-liberal government in Ontario has been fractured and confused. June 15 marked a potentially significant turning point. Firstly it showed us that we could stand up to their horrible force and fight. Secondly the day brought radical activists together again as part of a broader and hopefully sustained mobilization against the local agents of global capital. It gave the battle against global institutions in Seattle, Washington and Windsor a local and ongoing focus.

Since then much time and energy has been spent building the fighting spirit of June 15 in neighborhoods and communities where violence is inflicted everyday. This is the work which OCAP and its allies have begun. This year OCAP has been busy organizing in cities, workplaces, towns and reserves throughout Ontario working towards a series of acts of political and economic disruption throughout Ontario and beyond (as support has been expressed in Montréal, Detroit and Chicago). Rank-and-file unionists, Mohawk Warriors, homeless people, teachers, students and others have committed to a coordinated effort to make it impossible for the ruling governors to continue governing us. A number of flying squads have formed in union locals to support OCAP's direct action casework around immigration

and welfare issues.

The range of actions which are being planned reflect the local needs and concerns and the specific conditions in which people are living: blockades of rail lines on reserves, shutting down highways by truckers, closing the border points of the "NAFTA super-highway" between the US and Canadian states, occupations of factories in Windsor and Hamilton. OCAP is organizing a major kick-off action on October 16 in Toronto with actions to follow in other communities throughout the fall. These are not planned as symbolic acts designed to make a point (or shame a government which has no shame). The acts of disruption are aspects of working class unity and autonomy aimed at making it impossible for the government and its corporate backers to carry through their agenda.

The actions got off to a raucous start on June 12 when 50 people from OCAP and union flying squads held a "mock eviction" at Provincial Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's office. Flaherty, formerly Attorney General for Ontario, brought in the Safe Streets Act and has been a major force in pushing the Tory criminalization of poor people. As Labour Minister Flaherty put forward a bill making it more difficult to organize retail and service employees and easier for bosses to fend off union drives. Thirteen people, including fellow workers Robert Chrysler, Nathaniel Moses-Weiner and myself were arrested. Despite massive police intimidation efforts following that action, an OCAP assembly June 15-16 brought together several hundred delegates from Ontario and Quebec to discuss strategies and share plans.

Clearly the struggle in Ontario has been taken up a few notches which poses new challenges and problems for us. Letters of support and solidarity for the arrested can be sent to the Toronto GMB. For more information contact OCAP: Parkdale Office 4 MacDonell Avenue Toronto, Ontario M6R 2A2 <http://ocap.ca>

## Zimbabwe: strikers killed

Two workers were shot dead and 10 seriously injured on August 8 when riot police and soldiers fired live ammunition at thousands of striking Zimbabwe Iron and Steel Company (Ziscosteel) workers.

More than 4,000 Ziscosteel workers downed tools August 7, demanding salary increases of 400 percent. The government owns 89 percent of the company, which has been struggling to pay for raw materials.

Wages have been frozen for two years, and while management claims poverty the company bought 10 luxury cars for top management earlier this year.

Workers at Lancashire Steel Company in Kwekwe and at two other Ziscosteel outlets downed tools in solidarity with their colleagues at the Redcliff plant.

## IWW gets good press in writers' mag

BY BRIAN OLIVER SHEPPARD

The National Writers Union, a union affiliated with the UAW and the AFL-CIO, recently had good words to say about the IWW in the Summer 2001 issue of its quarterly publication *American Writer*:

"A century ago the 'muckraking' writers of the progressive and socialist movements helped arouse the national conscience against all-powerful corporations and destructive market forces. They usually took a pro-union viewpoint, but back then there were no unions for writers to join except that most amazing and wonderful organization, the Industrial Workers of the World, whose members sought to transcend divisions of the hand and the mind, the unskilled and the skilled, the American and the 'foreign.'

"The Wobblies even attempted to cross the color line which was being inscribed ever more deeply in the new century – a racial barrier that kept most workers of color out of trade unions, except when African Americans were too numerous to exclude ... as in the southern coal fields and port cities."

James Green, author of the piece ("True Inclusivity Led to Diverse Social Movement") and of *Taking History to Heart: The Power of the Past in Building Social Movements*, refers to the IWW in the past tense. However, he should know that the IWW still welcomes writers into its midst – as well as the skilled, unskilled, American, and foreign workers he refers to. And most Wobblies are also still working to "transcend divisions of the hand and the mind."

## Phoenix Wobblies Remember Bisbee Deportation

BY BILL KRIST X350932

The broiling sun had been up for three hours when we Wobblies converged on Phelps Dodge July 12, the July heat serving to remind us of the sufferings of our fellow workers in Bisbee. It was 84 years since the Phelps Dodge bosses and their lackeys broke our strike in Cochise County, Arizona; and we were at Phelps Dodge corporate headquarters in Phoenix, Arizona, to let them know We Never Forget!

The July 12, 1917, Bisbee kidnapping was the culmination of a campaign of terror against the Wobblies that began days earlier with the roundup of Wobblies throughout the state: "Kingman Rid of Industrial Workers," "Flagstaff has no use for traitorous band" and "Plot to Ruin Valley Crops" said the *Arizona Republican*. Most notable was a smaller deportation of some 60 Wobs in Jerome on July 10, 1917. The mayor of Jerome was quoted as bragging: "The reign of the Industrial Workers of the World is at an end."

The Phoenix GMB, aided by members of the Phoenix Anarchist Coalition, handed flyers to passersby outlining the particulars of the infamous 'deportation.'

Carrying picket signs indicting Phelps Dodge's labor, safety and environmental record, the demonstrators risked heat stroke to educate the public about the kidnapping of 1,186 workers and sympathizers, and their abandonment in the desert. Bearing a mock coffin inscribed with the name of murdered FW James Brew, we reminded Phelps Dodge and the state that they have his blood on their hands. FW Brew was shot while resisting being kidnapped. No one was ever convicted for this mass kidnapping and the murder. It was shortly after the Bisbee deportation that the Phoenix IWW local #272 office was raided and whatever wasn't destroyed was confiscated.

Many passersby were very supportive, standing in the heat to hear about the deportation. Soon, two workers from a nearby bagel shop came over and gave us three big bags full of cold water and juice, bagels and cream cheese, and doughnuts! Folks driving honked horns, yelled support and raised their fists as they passed by.

Two fellow workers went inside the building and demanded to see a public relations official. When she appeared, they presented her with flyers and a letter listing the wrongs her corporation did to the IWW, and the letter also told Phelps Dodge that it isn't too late for an apology and reparations. She seemed confused.

P/D is still a potent force in Az

Not long ago, then governor Bruce Babbitt obligingly sent the Arizona National Guard and Dept. of Public Safety to Phelps Dodge's mines to break a Steelworkers strike. Phelps Dodge is now erecting a new headquarters in downtown Phoenix and the city fathers (never tiring of kissing corporate ass!) have named the downtown area "Copper Square." The Phoenix GMB will continue to fight the bosses and their minions.

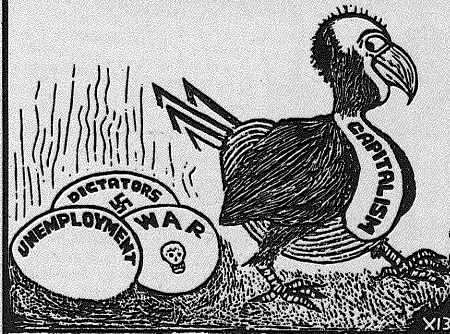
## Coca-Cola sued for threatening unionists

Coca-Cola Co and its main Latin American bottler Panamerican Beverages have been sued in U.S. District Court in Miami. The Colombian union Sinaltrainal, which represents workers in Coca-Cola's Colombian plants, charges Coke with using paramilitary forces to threaten labor leaders in soft drink bottling factories in Colombia.

Throughout Colombia paramilitary forces have assassinated more than 50 unionists since the beginning of the year, and killed 128 union members last year.

More than 1,500 union members have been killed by paramilitary agents in the last 10 years, according to the lawsuit.

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# books for Rebel Workers

## Back to School!

### Blackboard Unions By Marjorie Murphy

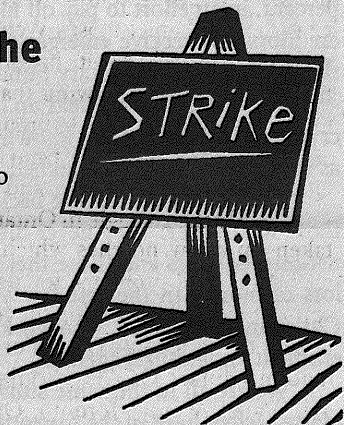
In *Blackboard Unions*, historian Marjorie Murphy tells the story of the struggle to unionize public school teachers, a group of mostly female workers traditionally considered "professionals" but paid starvation wages and denied any say in their working conditions. While some teachers joined professional associations and lobbied the government, others formed unions to defend their interests. Murphy opens with a 1902 strike in which Chicago students, fed up with substandard schools and autocratic administrators, rebelled against a new, centralized curriculum. The solidarity of students and parents emboldened teachers to unionize. Teachers' organizations followed often contradictory strategies of professionalization and solidarity, strategies that until a few decades ago were mirrored in the competition between the American Federation of Teachers (a union) and the National Education Association (a professional association). More recently, however, the AFT embraced "professional" rhetoric even as the NEA transformed itself into a union and actively reached out to civil rights and community groups. Murphy tells the story of the AFT's long, bitter struggle to win the right to organize, of its leaders' largely successful efforts to crush the radicals in its ranks, and of the union's abandonment of its community and student allies when it was forced to confront civil rights issues at home. While it has been a decade since this book's publication, the tensions between solidarity and professionalization and union democracy and business unionism continue to confront education workers, as does the fight to defend education from the assault on public services that has characterized American political life for so many decades.

304 pp. **Special Price \$10.00**

### Classrooms First! A History of the 1996 Oakland Teachers' Strike

By Jason Justice

When the Oakland Unified School District refused to respond to the concerns of teachers working within the district, they chose the wrong group of workers to mess with. Supported by community, parents and students, Oakland public school teachers urged smaller class sizes, higher wages and a contract. But when the district chose to abuse their workers by ignoring their concerns, the Oakland teachers were forced to go on strike. The year of 1996 marked the longest teachers' strike in the history of Oakland. In the United States, where the strikes are undermined and suppressed more greatly with each passing year, the Oakland teachers took a bold stand against the establishment. This pamphlet also includes "Solidarity with Teachers," a version of Solidarity Forever for education workers.



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## History you didn't learn in school

### A People's History of the United States: 1492 - Present by Howard Zinn

Consistently lauded for its lively, readable prose, this revised and updated edition of *A People's History of the United States* turns traditional textbook history on its head. Howard Zinn infuses the often-submerged voices of blacks, women, American Indians, war resisters, and poor laborers of all nationalities into this thorough narrative that spans American history from Christopher Columbus's arrival to an afterword on the Clinton presidency. There's also extensive coverage of the IWW's heydays.

Addressing his trademark reversals of perspective, Zinn—a teacher, historian, and social activist for more than 20 years—explains, "My point is not that we must, in telling history, accuse, judge, condemn Columbus in absentia. It is too late for that; it would be a useless scholarly exercise in morality. But the easy acceptance of atrocities as a deplorable but necessary price to pay for progress (Hiroshima and Vietnam, to save Western civilization; Kronstadt and Hungary, to save socialism; nuclear proliferation, to save us all)—that is still with us. One reason these atrocities are still with us is that we have learned to bury them in a mass of other facts, as radioactive wastes are buried in containers in the earth."

**688 pages, \$18.00**

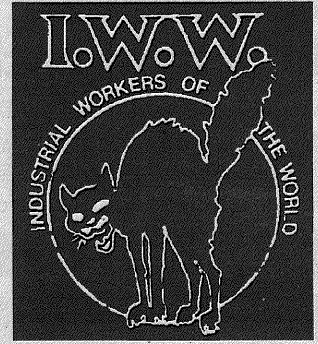
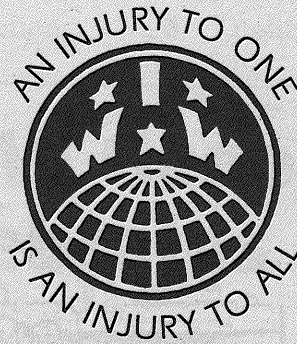
### Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology

Compiled and edited by Joyce L. Kornbluh. Culled from Wobblly periodicals from the movement's founding in 1905 to the present, *Rebel Voices* presents pamphlets, stories, songs, poems, courtroom testimony, skits, cartoons and illustrations that bring the story of the "minutemen of industrial unionism" to life in native accents. — *Detroit Labor News*

**\$24.00**

**Strike!** by Jeremy Brecher. A classic text—a history of American workers' struggle from a working-class viewpoint, arguing that class upsurges are based in everyday life and rank-and-file initiative. While this edition is somewhat less optimistic than the original, it still provides rich detail of workers' rebellions throughout American history, and abundant evidence for the proposition that workers are fully capable of making our own history, should we set our minds to the task. **\$22.00**

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by Des Patchrider. A lively and candid pamphlet on how the Dispatch Industry Workers Union organized English bike messengers from 1989 to 1992. Eventually this effort petered out but their innovative style of organizing provides an inspiration to all of us. **26pp \$3.50**

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# Workers resist bosses the whole world 'round

## Thai garment workers fight back

On April 19, 386 workers of the Ladybird Garment Company in Samutprakan, Thailand, demanded better wages, hours and conditions. Rather than negotiate, the company sent representatives to workers' homes encouraging them to withdraw the demands. The company promised workers who withdrew their names from the demands a new pair of workpants, a bonus, and pay in the event of a strike or lockout. However, only 136 workers succumbed to these bribes by the company's own count.

On June 5, the company distributed a fake announcement in the name of the union urging workers to be patient with the negotiations. Three days later they announced a lockout of 77 workers who were active in the union. Although an international campaign forced Ladybird to reinstate the 77 workers and to negotiate a contract with the union, the company has been violating many of the settlement terms. While Ladybird added agreed-upon transportation in the morning, workers are still crowded into the company vehicles at night and have to stand for the ride. There is still no nurse in the factory (legally required and also written into the new contract) and management is proposing to substitute a worker with a week-long training course. Union members are being discriminated against in overtime assignments, and are kept separated from non-union members in the factory.

Ladybird workers are asking that supporters contact the buyers (Guess, Gym-boree, PreNatal and TJ Max and Marshalls) to let them know that while they are glad to be working again, they need the contract to be implemented and an end to discrimination against union supporters. The workers don't want buyers to withdraw orders, but to urge the company to allow union members the same rights as other employees.

The following companies produce at Ladybird: Guess Co-CEOs Maurice and Paul Marciano, 1444 S. Alameda St., Los Angeles CA 90021 Phone: 213-765-3100 Fax: 213-744-7838; TJX Companies (owns TJ Max and Marshalls), Chairman Bernard Cammarata, 770 Cochituate Rd., Framingham MA 01701 Phone: 508-390-1000 Fax: 508-390-2828

## Solidarity aids U.S. Trico oil workers

Under pressure from the Norwegian oil workers' union NOPEF, Trico Marine Services has promised to send all its American employees contact information for unions organizing in their sector. NOPEF had threatened to black Trico's Norwegian subsidiary unless the parent company in the U.S. respected American workers' right to organize.

Trico supplies shipping services to the offshore oil and gas industry. But while the company respects labor rights in Norway, it has been strongly anti-union in the U.S.

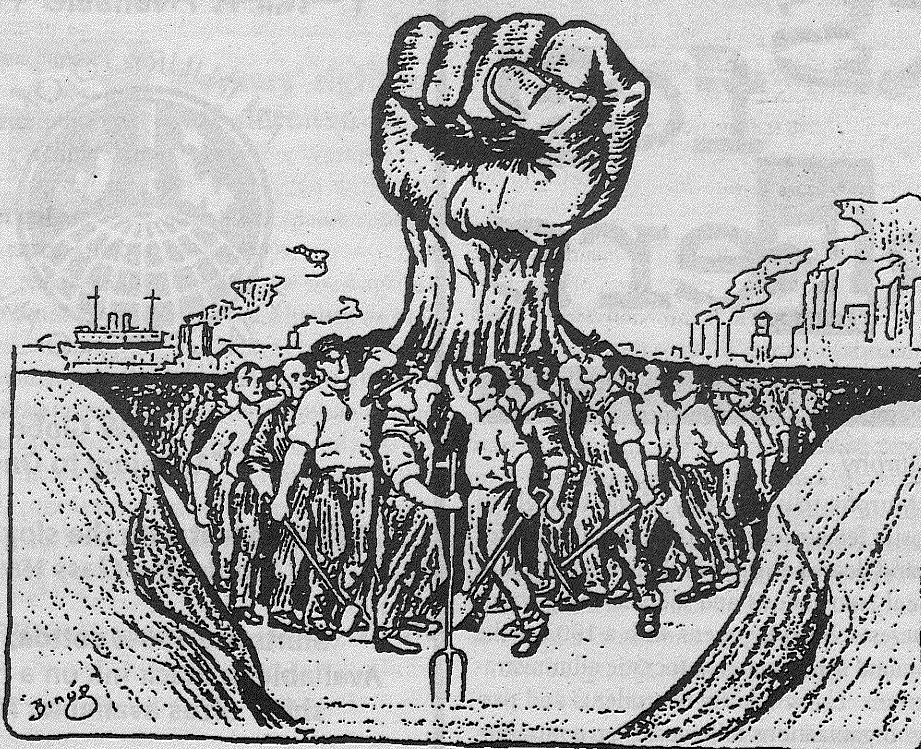
The promise is "a step in the right direction," NOPEF's president said. "As long as we experience progress in what we see as negotiations, we will not start a boycott."

## Anti-union Labour Party

Britain's GMB union has voted to slash its contribution to the Labour Party by £250,000 a year, to protest Tony Blair's drive to privatize public services. The money saved will be spent on measures to pressure the government to change its policy.

Unison, Britain's biggest union which pays Labour £1.36 million a year, is also reviewing its links with the party.

GMB officials voted unanimously to reduce funding. "I did not spend four weeks standing on doorsteps, ringing bells and delivering leaflets to be stabbed in the back," said an executive member.



## Bangladesh: 24 workers killed

The National Garments Workers Federation reports that 24 garment workers were crushed to death August 8 when a fire alarm sounded on the seventh floor of an eight-story factory building in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

The fire was quickly extinguished. But the main gates were locked, and the southern gate was not opened by security guards until 15 minutes after the alarm sounded. In the panic, 24 workers were crushed to death and nearly 100 seriously injured.

The building housed four factories: Macro Sweater Ltd., Europa Garments, Ajax Sweater, and Four Wings Garment.

This tragedy follows the Chowdhury Knitwear fire of Nov. 25, when 51 workers were burned to death – including five workers 10 to 12 years old, and three 14 year olds. Bangladeshi factory owners remain completely indifferent, insisting they have adequate protections in place.

It also follows a July 1 general strike by garment unions demanding health and safety protections, union rights, and implementation of a 1997 agreement to set an industry-wide minimum wage and a six-day week.

The Bangladesh Garments Workers Unity Council brought together seven unions, mobilizing thousands of workers on the streets. Several workers were injured when police attacked strikers, and 25 workers were arrested. At least 17 factories were damaged in Mohakhali – by goons hired by the factory owners to discredit the strike movement, according to union leaders. The damage served as a pretext for the arrests, and for legal charges now pending against union organizers. And on August 2 Iqbal Majumder, general secretary of the Bangladesh Textile Workers Federation was assassinated while leaving his office.

## Siberian Confederation of Labor & the Labor Code

BY VASILII STAROSTIN, OMSK

On June 18 members of the Siberian Confederation of Labor (the anarcho-syndicalist union group - SKT) held an informational picket in the center of Omsk, and distributed leaflets describing the attempts of the government and the official trade unions to move the anti-worker revision of the basic law on labor through the legislature (the Duma). The next day members of the SKT's air dispatcher's union began a hunger strike.

After the declaration of the strike, the prosecutor announced that he would bring criminal charges against union activists Anatoly Stepanov and Vyacheslav Shcheglov. The Omsk Confederation of Labor (Omsk section of the SKT) has provided an attorney to defend the dispatchers, in case the prosecutor makes good his threat.

## General Strike rocks Argentina

Argentina's state workers marched through Buenos Aires August 8. Public teachers, civil servants, university students and thousands of unemployed people convened in parks and intersections before a mass rally in front of the presidential office in the capital.

The 48-hour strike was called to protest President Fernando De la Rúa's decision to cut government salaries and pensions by 13 percent, in an effort to pay off international creditors and receive emergency cash from the International Monetary Fund.

The demonstrators held up banners decrying the austerity plan, known in Spanish as the "ajuste," as they marched.

"They're always cutting back on us, on those who suffer. They never hit the multinational bankers and those that have made lots of money in the last few years," said Christian Valcaldá, 26, who works for a government agricultural agency.

"We are all in the same situation," said Marta Maffei, head of the Argentine Confederation of Education Workers (CTERA). "The people are all affected by these cutbacks and by exclusion, misery and poverty. Nobody escapes."

Official unemployment figures for Argentina, Latin America's third largest economy, show that more than 16 percent are out of work.

## Guatemalan workers attacked

BY CAMPAIGN FOR LABOR RIGHTS

After a year-long clandestine campaign, unions at the Choishin and Cimatextiles factories in Guatemala, owned by Korean-based company Choi & Shin's, went public July 9. Both factories produce for Liz Claiborne and are located in Villa Nueva, just outside Guatemala City. The larger plant, Choishin, is being monitored by COVERCO as part of a pilot project of Liz Claiborne. Liz Claiborne is on the board of the Fair Labor Association, an organization that coordinates independent monitoring of garment factories.

Despite this, union supporters face death threats, threats to close the factory, blackmail, captive meetings during work hours to denounce the union, and the stoning of their meeting place while meetings are taking place.

On July 18th, unionists were attacked by a mob of non-union workers orchestrated by factory management, which motivated the mob with threats that the factory would close and that the workers would never get work again. The attack followed a supervisors' meeting, and was observed by personnel

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## Nigerian workers in strike wave

BY SAMUEL MBAH, AWARENESS LEAGUE

The current wave of strikes, that have all but paralyzed the health and educational sectors demonstrates that the post-military transition period in the country has presented workers with a unique opportunity for self-discovery of their historical role as agents of change. It has dawned on organized labor that the minimum wage of N5,500.00 (less than US\$50 per month), which the Obasanjo administration holds up as something spectacular is indeed a mere pittance, an empty shell, vis-à-vis the gale of retrenchment set in motion by the ongoing privatization bazaar in the country.

Curiously, the strike bug reared its head in an unlikely quarter recently; as workers of the leading national newspaper *The Guardian* embarked on an industrial action which forced the paper off the streets for two weeks. You will recall ("Workers besiege Nigerian bank," last issue) that the newspaper accused the Nigerian Labour Congress of "anarcho-syndicalist tactics."

It is an eternal credit to the struggles that the Awareness League has had to wage that today, words like "anarchism" or "anarcho-syndicalism" are being used in public discourse. We are not relenting all the same.

## Aussie government seizes union assets

Victorian Industrial Relations Minister Monica Gould has ordered former judge Stephen Alley to divide the assets of the Australian Builders Labourers Federation. The BLF was ordered dissolved 15 years ago by the government. The union was known for its militant, direct action tactics, including many instances in which its members refused to allow construction projects that threatened the environment to go forward.

The assets include three properties worth about AUS \$4 million, and AUS \$858,000 in funds. More than \$1 million from the BLF legacy is believed to have been spent on legal costs as the government fought to obtain control of the funds.

The government originally seized the properties and bank accounts, but was ordered to hand them over to the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, which former BLF members joined, after an Australian Industrial Relations Commission hearing in 1995. The AIRC finding was overturned by the High Court in September 1998.

## Auto workers strike for pension guarantees

Faced with a situation where workers have lost millions in pension benefits after management took companies into bankruptcy, Australian workers have turned to industrial action.

Some 350 Tristar auto workers have settled a two-week strike over the company's refusal to sign on to a union-backed pension plan and to casualize up to a fifth of its workforce. Nearly 12,000 auto workers were laid off during the dispute due to lack of parts, and Workplace Relations Minister Tony Abbott condemned the Tristar workers as "traitors" for their temerity in defending their right to a future.

While Tristar refused to sign on to the union plan, it abandoned the casualization scheme and agreed to take out a bond to guarantee the solvency of its pension plan.

Unions will continue to press employers to sign on to their Manusafe plan, which they say is necessary to protect workers from employers who abandon their obligations. The government says the plan would unacceptably increase union power.